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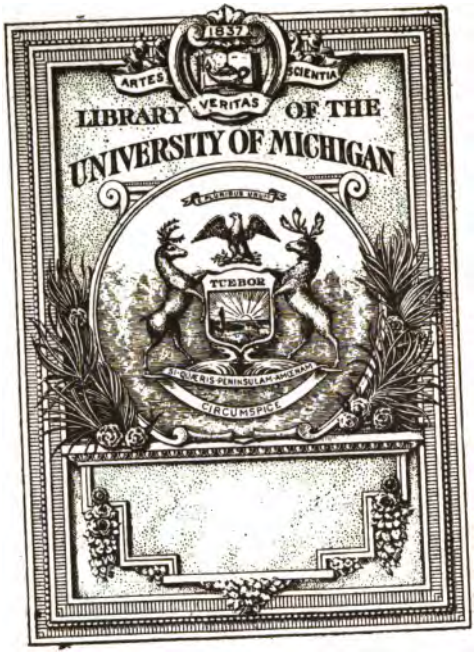
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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

CHRISTOPHER KIRKLAND.

BY

MRS. LYNN LINTON,

AUTHOR OF

'THE TRUE HISTORY OF JOSHUA DAVIDSON,' 'PATRICIA KEMBALL,' 'THE ATONEMENT OF LEAM DUNDAS,' 'UNDER WHICH LORD?' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

CHRISTOPHER KIRKLAND.

CHAPTER I.

SOCIETY was beginning to busy itself with the question of woman's rights when I was young. Now it is an established cause, aggressive where it was then only a protest. Naturally I was, and am, among those who hold that women, though helpmates, should not be slaves to men; that duties do not exclude rights; and that 'He to God, she

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to God through him,' though pretty enough in poetry, makes but a mighty poor kind of life for her in practice, and reduces co-partnership to serfdom. My own creed in these things may be summed up in these three clauses:—That women should have an education as good in its own way as, but not identical with, that of men; that they ought to hold their own property free from their husbands' control without the need of trustees, but subject to the joint expenditure for the family; that motherhood should be made legally equal with paternity, so that no such miserable scandal of broken promises and religious rancour as this later Agar-Ellis case should be possible. But these are only the alphabet of the movement; the main theme goes far beyond.

Things had already begun to move. Talfourd's Bill, giving the custody of young children to the mother, had been passed after a stout resistance from the Law Lords on the Obstructive side. One of these said

that, should this Bill become law, the avenues to the Court of Chancery would be choked with applicants for legal separation, as nothing but the fear of being parted from her children kept many a wife with her husband. The prophecy was disregarded; the Bill passed; and married life in England has gone on much the same as before.

The sensational part of the matter was, the story of that man in the Marshalsea prison who took his suckling babe from his wife and handed it over to his mistress—a possibility of action on all fours with the vilest features of slavery.

It is wonderful to think how we supported such hideous injustice; just as it is wonderful now to think how the absolute power of making a will, and thereby leaving all his property away from his wife and children, is still maintained as part of the rights of a man. The argument of trust in the natural softness of the parental instinct is about as solid as a drum. It makes a

fine sound when nicely struck; but it is a rickety kind of foundation to build on.

Though the core of this question of woman's rights is just and reasonable, some of its supporters were even then too extreme for my ideas of what was fitting. I could not accept the doctrine that no such thing as natural limitation of sphere is included in the fact of sex, and that individual women may, if they have the will and the power, do all those things which have hitherto been exclusively assigned to men. Nor can I deny the value of inherent modesty; nor despise domestic duties; nor look on maternity as a curse and degradation—'making a woman no better than a cow,' as one of these ladies, herself a mother, once said to me indignantly; nor do I join in the hostility to men which comes in as the correlative of all that has gone before. On these points I have parted company with the cause. But in the beginning these points had not come to the front.

Also, I have confessed already to the frivolity of finding many of these extremely advanced women antagonistic to my ideas of feminine charm. Most of them then, in the early days, were not only plain in person but ill-bred in manner. The epigram of the time, 'Women's Rights are Men's Lefts,' was truer then than it is now, when the circle has widened. In the first cast the net took in, as by far the largest proportion, the most unpersonable and the least love-worthy of the sex. But this æsthetic distaste on my part was what the Americans call 'mean' in view of the gravity of the principles involved, and I was always ashamed of my own childishness of judgment.

I tried to make myself tolerant of all this unloveliness, by remembering that the cause, being in the initial stage of protest and insurrection, must necessarily be supported by those who had nothing to lose and all to gain, as well as necessarily sur-

rounded by that kind of exaggeration which is inseparable from the beginning of radical innovations. But tolerance is an exotic with me, got by painful processes of self-discipline and preserved only with care and watching. When I was in my fighting age, it was either the crime of indifferentism or of time-serving, and I put it behind me as high-treason to truth.

This is the penalty attached to earnestness—the harsh lining of enthusiasm.

My present intolerance, I am sorry to say, was even less respectable than this. It was simply a matter of taste; and the cause undeniably suffered with me because so many of its advocates were ungainly and unlovely.

In those days the movement did not include the political rights which—the rest having been won—make now the point to be gained. It was more for the right of a liberal education, such as is given by Girton and Newnham; for office-work; and specially

for leave to enter the medical profession on an equality with men.

In this last I was again at issue with the sect. Unless the demand for female doctors was strong enough to support female schools and hospitals, I maintained, and maintain, the inexpediency of providing a few lady-doctors by means of mixed medical education—just as I dislike mixed drawing-classes from the nude. These two things seemed to me repugnant to every sentiment of morality or decency in either sex; and I have never been able to change my view. For, granting that in the end science and art conquer all sense of shame and bear down all consciousness of sex, then surely the last state is worse than the first—and these young unmarried women have killed within them something more valuable than they will replace by the knowledge of anatomy and the human figure.

As yet, however, mixed life schools were not in force—I only knew of one in those

days, private, little known and conducted secretly; and but few young women had clanked into the dissecting-room. Miss Garrett, the two Misses Blackwell and Dr. Mary Walker are all that I remember. There may have been others, but if so I did not know of them. The aftermath of flirting, touzled, pretty young creatures—foolish virgins of eighteen or nineteen—by whom the ground has been covered, had not then sprouted into being; and as yet the world was spared the oracular utterances by which these Hypatias seek to regulate all the difficulties and pronounce on all the questions of life and science.

Speaking of Dr. Mary Walker, I may as well say here that the Bloomer costume which she wore, with that huge rose in her hair as her sign of sex, did much to retard the woman question all round. The world is frivolous, no doubt, but here, as in France, ridicule kills, and you can force convictions sooner than tastes. When that handsome

barmaid in Tottenham Court Road put on trousers as a greater attraction to gin-drinkers, not only Bloomerism received its death-blow, but the cause got a 'shog 'maist ruined a'.' It survived, however; and now flourishes like a green bay-tree.

Equal political rights; identical professional careers; the men's virile force toned down to harmony with the woman's feminine weakness; the abolition of all moral and social distinctions between the sexes;—These are the confessed objects of the movement whereby men are to be made lady-like and women masculine, till the two melt into one, and you scarcely know which is which.

Since those early days of which I am now writing, much of what was then agitated for has been granted, and many abuses have been removed. One of the most important was the Bill which raises the age of the child necessarily left to the mother in cases of separation, from Tal-

fourd's three and a half to seven years—giving afterwards to the child the right at sixteen to choose between its parents. This short Bill, of two clauses only, slipped through the House unnoticed; and I have always held it for good that the Emancipated Women did not get wind of it, and by their clamour draw on it the attention, and consequent hostility, of the Conservatives. The Married Women's Property Act has given the widest range of freedom possible in any kind of partnership. Girton and Newnham minister to the intellectual cravings of girls and supply stimulus for their ambition. Female colleges and hospitals make the study of medicine decent, and India offers a lucrative and useful field of practice. Slade-schools give Adam and Eve in all their desired nudity, and young unmarried women exhibit themselves on the walls of the Academy naked and not ashamed. The Post Office and the Telegraph Office put money into the pockets o

some hundreds of industrious girls; and there is at least one female firm—there may be more, but I know only of one—which 'devils' for lawyers, and makes a good thing by its labours. Other women do other things of a like nature. Some keep co-operative stores and some breed horses; and some again make books and understand the mysteries of fields and favourites, 'two to one bar one' and hedging, better than they understand the science of housekeeping or the art of needlework. The School-Boards test the value of their administrative faculty; and Lady Harberton's divided skirt satisfies the sentiment and does not shock the taste.

Thus, in all directions, the running has been more equalized, and women are now handicapped mainly by their sex. On that point they have to try conclusions with nature. To break up the cradles for fire-wood must be the first step in the series of transformations; for as long as that obstructive cradle exists, and is filled, there

must be the division of labour and function against which women revolt, and men must fare forth while they bide within.

When the cause was yet young it found its nidus chiefly in the house of one who brought as her contribution a fair person, a good position, money, fervour, sincerity, intelligence, the oddest and most catholic sweepings of adherents, and only just not enough liberality to tolerate opposition. She herself was singularly sweet and charming; thoroughly feminine, her doctrines notwithstanding; and without the affectation and exaggeration which characterize the mass of the pretty persons who have gone over to this side in these later days. In those, she was almost the only pretty woman the cause could boast. Her house was the rendezvous for all Liberals of all kinds; and one of the causes she and her husband had at heart was that of emancipation and the equalization of the negro race. I remember one of her protégés was a certain Miss Red-

mayne a woman as black as her own American grapes ; who had studied medicine under the Stars and Stripes and who now wanted to practise it under the Union Jack. She was a dreadful looking woman, with a kind of devouring, wild-beast air, oppressive and almost terrifying. Her glittering eyes and tufted hair, wide mouth, white, pointed teeth and jet-black skin, made her remarkable enough in a room full of fair-faced Saxons; but add to these a curious rapacious manner—an eager, restless, following way in eye and foot, unlike anything seen in ordinary society—and it is easy to understand how antipathetic she must have been to the majority, even of Liberals. I shall never forget the way in which she followed up a fair-haired, slightly-built artist to whom she was talking. He edged away, step by step—she always following close on his track—till he finally edged himself into the corner, where she had him at her will. So there they were, a black

cat and a white mouse; and the poor white mouse shivered, while the black cat pranced triumphant.

My friend, our hostess, thought it mean and cowardly that no English gentleman came forward to marry this unlovely daughter of Ham. I should have held it as an act of madness if anyone had.

It was in this house that I first met Mr. and Mrs. Lambert, with whom I made one of those intimate friendships which invariably lead to sequels and complications.

Joshua Lambert was an artist, shiftless, dreamy, unpractical, morally self-indulgent, personally pure and ascetic; a man who could live on bread and spring-water, but who would not work in his studio when he wanted to be out in the sunshine, and who exhaled in thought all the strength that should have gone into action. He was a man whom everyone loved and was sorry for—regretting his want of practical grip, while reverencing the beauty of holiness

which pervaded his whole nature. And yet, between the two, love predominated, and reverence was stronger than regret.

His wife was a woman of like nature, but with more 'go' in her than he had—with an active force behind her wanting to him. He was a dreamer of ideal beauty, she was a worker for ideal perfection. Thus their views were harmonious while their methods were diverse.

She was a Woman's Rights woman from head to heel. A kind of antitypical Louise Michel, doubled with a Madonna, she gathered under the wide cloak of her womanly pity all the suffering and down-trodden, all the oppressed and all the unfortunate. She knew no blame save for the fashionable and the frivolous. The core of her morality was charity; the mainspring of her character, purity; the force by which she worked, belief in the all-pervading Providence of God. Married and a mother, but still almost virginal in her modesties,

she abhorred licentiousness as something even worse than murder. At the same time she reverenced love as the true marriage, and when this was real she held other ties superfluous.

Thus, she was one of the guests at that famous supper given to his personal friends and sympathisers by Mr. ——, when, with his wife's hardly-won consent, he brought up his children's governess as his acknowledged supplementary wife, and with but thin ideas of decency called together this cloud of witnesses to celebrate the nuptials. For herself, Esther Lambert was as chaste and pure as ice and snow; but her Liberalism and sympathy supplied what was wanting to her temperament, and she could accept in another an action which she would rather have died than have committed in her own person.

She was a lecturer of some repute; and her platform life was the result, not only of her belief in the righteousness of the things

she advocated, but also of the need there was for adding to the tale of loaves, which, at the best, came in but scant numbers for the many hungry little mouths to be fed. As it was, the ordering of the household was narrow to penury and its simplicity touched on destitution.

The first time I went down to their house on the borders of Epping Forest, I felt as if I had got into a new world—one with which my experiences on this old earth of ours had no point in common, and were of no use as guide nor glossary. Playing in the neglected, untrimmed garden, where never tree nor bush was lopped nor pruned, and where the long grass of the lawn was starred with dandelions and daisies as better flowers than those which man could cultivate, was a troop of little children, one of whom was more beautiful than another. They were all dressed exactly alike—in long blouses of that coarse blue flannel with which housemaids scrub the floors ; and all had pre-

cisely the same kind of hats—the girls distinguished from the boys only by a somewhat broader band of faded ribbon. Nazarenes, even to the eldest boy of fourteen, they wore their hair as Nature ordained, in long loose locks to their shoulders. It was difficult to distinguish the sex in this queer epicene costume, which left it doubtful whether they were girls Bloomerized or boys in feminine tunics; for the only differences were—cloth trousers for the boys, cotton for the girls, and the respective width of the hat-ribbon aforesaid. But they were lovely as angels, and picturesque as so many Italian studies; so that amazement lost itself in admiration, and one forgave the unfitness of things for the sake of their beauty.

The house itself was found and furnished on the same lines. There were no carpets, but there were rare pictures and first proofs unframed; casts of noble cinque-cento work, darkened with dust; superb shells; and all

the precious lumber of an artist's home, crowded on shelves of rough-hewn, unvarnished deal set against the unpapered white-washed wall. There were not enough chairs for the family, and empty packing-cases eked out the deficiency. For their food, meat was a luxury; wine as rare as Olympian nectar; and sweetmeats were forbidden as the analogues of vicious luxury. Milk, bread, vegetables and oatmeal, with treacle as the universal sweetener, were the food-stuffs by which the Lamberts believed they should rear a family consecrated to the work of God in the world and the carrying out of the regeneration of society. The boys were to be great artists or divine poets. The girls were to be preachers or prophetesses. One or two might be told off as mothers, to keep up the supply of the Chosen. But, for the most part, their sphere of activity would be the world, not the home—their care, humanity, not the family.

No man nor woman who knew her could have failed to love and reverence Esther Lambert. No matter how little you sympathized with her methods, you could not do other than respect and admire her personality. Her face was the face of a Madonna, behind whose sweetness flashed the inspired enthusiasm of a sibyl. It was the most perfect combination of moral purity and intellectual ardour to be found, and drew all hearts to love, like that Blue Glory of Torcelli. Earnest and religious, something beyond the ordinary thought of humanity seemed to shine in her soft grey eyes; and had she announced herself another Mother of God, she would have found some to believe her by the very force of her own inner truth and purity. As it was, she stopped short of miracles, and contented herself with inspiration.

Her political creed was her religion; the emancipation of woman was her mission; the equalization of the sexes was her shibboleth;

but the supremacy of woman was her secret sacrament. She believed in the regeneration of man by this supremacy, and by this only. All masculine modes of dealing with nature and society were false and futile. No good could come of political economy, of sociology, of science, of statesmanship. All these were of the nature of Dead Sea apes and the Unveracities. But, once admit women into the domain of active politics, and then would come the moral millennium. Deception would be burned out of diplomacy, to leave the pure gold fillet of mutual candour unclogged by dross of any kind; abstract right would take the place of godless expediency; wars would cease; territorial aggressions and annexations would be no more; and the reign of peace and truth, of justice without flaw, and perfect purity of life alike for men and women, would begin. She believed all things of the future and she hoped all things from the present. She had neither fear nor misgiving; and her

faith saw in every day so much advance, and in every circumstance a coign of vantage gained and held for future progress. A new society for the advocacy of any form of Liberal opinion was to her equivalent to a victory. A pamphlet was another gospel which must compel assent. A speech was like a judgment of Solomon which no one could repudiate. Her life was the perpetual ascending of a rainbow—an endless mounting of the ladder let down from heaven, with angels before and on each side, showing her the way and directing her steps. Her faith bore her up over all dismaying obstacles; and when bad times were on hand within, as was so often the case—when the family wanted food and the house wanted funds—she would raise her beautiful eyes to heaven, and say, serenely smiling: 'God will provide.'

And so far as they had yet gone, ravens had supplied them somehow; and the children had not starved.

Esther's theological creed was a large loose jumble of Christianity and Pantheism, the chief working tenets of which were:—belief in the direct personal superintendence of God over the affairs of men, faith in the power of truth and the invincibility of the right, with the correlative belief that falsehood would not prevail nor wrong ultimately conquer because of this personal rule of God and the 'stream of tendency' in humanity.

'Men and women want only to be told the better thing—to be shown the higher way,' she used to say earnestly. 'No one wishes to do wrong. It is simply ignorance, not wilful intention, which leads us astray. When all men are taught of God, then they will of necessity act justly. The Truth is God; and God's laws are the ultimate laws of life. It is only a question of time; and in the end they must prevail.'

For all its vagueness, her enthusiasm gained on me. Her arc was very wide, and

though not drawn with mathematical precision and rather sketchy in its lines, it was nevertheless grandly suggestive. Her words were full of that heroic promise, that mysterious magnificence, which surrounds the shining domes of a city seen from afar in the morning light. By noon we shall be there to see with our own eyes the treasure lying therein — to find the lady of our dreams ; the brother consecrated to our friendship from our birth ; the teacher who will show us the meaning of the Great Cabbala ; the hierophant who will take the veil from off the face of Isis. Her words stirred my imagination as much as noble scenery stirs it ; and I felt her to be a kind of dynamic power to which others must apply the direction—but she was always that power.

I used to attend her lectures—I, the declared enemy of the whole tribe of lady lecturers !—and I always vigorously applauded her. I made it up somehow be-

tween my consistency and my partisanship by convincing myself that Esther Lambert was essentially different from all the others. She was so real in her self-devotion, her sincerity, her faith in herself and her cause! There was no playing a part, anyhow; just as there was no consciousness, no simper, no affectation and no vulgarity. She spoke well too, and did not offend one's taste by matter nor manner. She did not touch on doubtful subjects; and she had always more the air of an old-time prophetess, re-embodied, than that of a modern lady-lecturer spouting on a platform to a half-curious and half-disdainful audience. She was so completely absorbed in her subject, and so earnest to do good, that she won my admiration all round; and I approved in her what I condemned in others.

For all that, I wished her little tribe had been better cared for, better taught and nourished and more practically handled than they were; that the house had been

less of a squalid and disorganized barrack than it was; and that her husband had been a little more the master and head than she allowed him to be. Maybe he would not have guided things a whit better; but it would have been more seemly, and his influence over the boys would probably not have been quite so emasculating as hers. I was Philistine enough to feel that the saint is less useful than the housekeeper, and that Mary's part is not always the most profitable.

Still, this fractional want of sympathy with the fringes of things did not touch the substance of my respect and liking for the Lamberts. And as I was not responsible for the life they made together, and as really it was not in my right to either criticize or condemn, I was glad to be their friend, and to love where I could not follow.

After I had known them about three years, Joshua Lambert died. He had often been ailing, and the fatal disease which had

threatened him for so long, and which I always must think might have been averted by a little common-sense and care, at last declared itself in unmistakable fashion enough. He died of rapid consumption in less than two months from the first visit of the mesmeric herbalist who attended him. For of course the Lamberts were believers in both mesmerists and herbalists. They were mystic all through ; and clairvoyant prescriptions, dealing with natural simples, field-grown, were to them saturated with a spiritual power wanting altogether to the coarser therapeutics of allopathists and their mineral medicines.

Naturally, I was much with my poor friends at this time. They clung to me like children, and I was glad to put all my resources at their disposal. Strength and energy—time and money—I poured all into their hands, and thought nothing lost which gained them ease. I was deeply interested in them. They had fascinated me by their

very strangeness, linked as this was to so much goodness and so much beauty; and feeling myself to be of use to them seemed to compensate me for the loss of her whom her creed—and Christ—had taken from me. The simplicity with which they accepted all I did for them, as of the natural order of things, had also its charm.

Looked at from their point of view, it was better than gratitude; because it was the right thing to do, and if I were a true man I could do nothing else. They would as soon have thought of praising me for not telling lies nor picking pockets, as for bearing the burden of friends too heavily laden to bear it for themselves. Of course, this kind of communism brought about a closer intimacy, and on my side a still deeper affection—the helper always loving the dependent.

At last the end came. Poor beauty-loving and unpractical Joshua Lambert took his last look of the blessed sun, and

smiled his last wan smile up to the face of day and all he loved. He died as he had lived, without struggle as without regret; without bitterness, and in love with all mankind; full of faith in his own enduring blessedness beyond the grave and in the Divine goodness for those he left behind; sure that his dear ones would be cared for by the Father—working principally through me.

Not an hour before he breathed his last hard breath he said, with a faint flicker of his old boyish smile and that tranquil assurance which had so often amused me in the difficult moments of past times :

'I leave them to you, dear friend. I have always held that God sent you to us for our good, and I die quite happy, sure that you will accept your charge and fulfil its obligations.'

'Do not be afraid, Joshua,' said Esther tenderly. 'Chris knows his duty, and he has never failed in it yet.'

I need not spread out this part of my life in detail. In view of what followed, it is too full of pain to be willingly dwelt on. So much only I need say:—I was in that frame of mind which made benevolence my greatest solace and my only happiness. I had the desire to sacrifice myself for the well-being of others, feeling in this self-sacrifice my purest balm. I had given up my love for truth:—now I wanted to give myself as an offering to God, through man. Believing still in spiritual direction, and in the moral governance of the world through duties and chastisements, I believed that I was indeed specially ordained by God to serve and save this family. I had come among them at the moment when they had had most need of me. Joshua had lived just long enough to consolidate our friendship; and among all they knew I was the only one who could really help and practically benefit them. It would be a good thing to do. If I could rescue a noble

creature like Esther Lambert from the degrading influences of debt and poverty, bring a more rational rule into the household, and set her children well before the world by a more wholesome education, I should redeem the past. If I could not be happy in my own highest and deepest affection, I could at least make others blessed; and in their well-being find my own.

I thought over all this, and prayed for guidance with all the fervour of my boyish days. My prayers, of course, answered themselves, and asking for Divine Direction only strengthened my own inclination. Full of desire to serve one whom I loved and respected—eager to make loyal response to the poor dead friend who had trusted me—seeing only all that was beautiful in Esther's nature and pitiful in her condition—loving the children like my own, and earnest to see them better cared for, better taught, more wisely guided than they were—my common-sense overweighted by religious

zeal and altruistic pity, by affection, by principle and by hope—I took the irretrievable step; and in less than two years from Joshua's death I married his widow and took her family for my own.

Behind this strange fact lay contradictions yet more strange. Personally, Esther failed to satisfy my taste. She was short, ungraceful, and careless in her dress, which was also of notable neglect. She was unthrifty; without method; and of the two she preferred disorder to regularity. Nothing could make her punctual nor orderly; and the love of free nature which left the daisies and dandelions on the lawn and forbore to lop the low-growing branches of the trees, manifested itself in the house by a liberal dislocation of hours and the want of circumscription—of apportionment—all through. But she was earnest, sincere, devoted, gentle-mannered; and she had that perilous gift of loving idealization by which she made one see one's best and highest self—one's ideal

angel—mirrored in her mind as the work-a-day commonplace human being. And I was blinded by the splendour of the Divine handwriting on the wall, which I thought bade me do this thing; and by my somewhat arrogant belief that I was strong enough to remould and to save.

I do not mean to say that I married with any personal reluctance, but I do say that I married with more sense of duty than of attraction, and that I knew I was making a sacrifice. But it was a sacrifice willingly made—for God's sake and for humanity's, represented by that desolate widow and her children. No action of my life was ever based on more simple religiousness of feeling, on a more entire sense of duty than was this. In none did I ever wish to do so well for others, with so little regard for my own condition.

One thing, by the way, I stipulated for as a sacrifice on Esther's side; she was to give up her public life and keep to her home like

any other wife and mother. What in the beginning had helped to fascinate the friend on the outside of things, revolted the husband who had made himself responsible for the conduct of the family. I confess this frankly. Whatever of egotism, of inconsistency may lie in the admission, I make it, and accept the blame accruing. The home which Joshua Lambert had found sufficient for his happiness would be the grave of mine; and I could no more have lived in the neglect, disorder, unthrift and squalor which had been the normal condition of things in his time, than I could have lived in a wigwam with a Cherokee Indian for my squaw. Hence I stipulated for the abandonment of the platform for the fireside, and for the maintenance of a more conventionally ordered household.

I also urged Esther to give me a list of her debts; but this I could never get from her. Not because she was ashamed; nor because she wished to conceal them; simply

because she could not understand the value of financial order, and had always that trust in ravens and things coming right of themselves which despises effort. I could not convince her of the need of method, regularity, foresight, or any other economic virtue. She was sweet in word and acquiescent in manner; smiled; promised compliance—and indeed did much that I wished because I wished it. But I never touched the core. I had modified the envelope for a time; but before I had been married two months, I asked myself the question: 'How long will this last? Will temperament and long usage prove too strong for the new practice? and, Will the bent bow spring back and the strained cord break?'

CHAPTER II.

I HAD furnished my house with such taste as I possessed and such sufficiency as my means would allow; and I had made it what I thought would please my wife to live in, and interest her to keep in good condition. I say 'I,' because she left all the details to me, down to the most intimate arrangements. Our rôles were inverted from the beginning, and I had to be man and woman both. She had no taste, she said. She did not care whether a room were blue or brown, green or yellow. She thought it a pity—and more—to spend on material the time and money which

should be given to humanity; and she could not be made to approve of that which she regarded as the maladministration of a trust. But as it was my own money that I was spending, she let it pass without active opposition, and contented herself with being a kind of passive drag on the wheel, neither aiding nor preventing.

Also she allowed me to change the ordering of things for the children. Their epicene costume was put off for the ordinary jackets and frocks of ordinary English children; the boys were sent to school, a governess taught the girls at home. She used to laugh at their studies, but quite good-naturedly, without malice or bitterness—only with a little gentle ridicule; the ridicule of superior insight and higher aims—finding art and literature mere waste of precious time, and woman's work, such as sewing and the like, degrading to the finer functions. Still, she left Miss Palmer, the governess, very much

to herself, and did not interfere in her curriculum. She was indeed very sweet and complaisant in those early days; and of two threads, the white is as true as the black.

All things in the house, and the house itself, being new and fresh, the radical defects of my wife's character as a mistress were not at the first visible. Though I objected to the children amusing themselves by carving fancy arabesques on the sideboard, playing at ball in the drawing-room, slitting up the oil-cloth, and the like, things went on with peaceful serenity; and for the first two months we 'stood on velvet.' Also, the sense of security from poverty, of rest from strain, of a stable background and a strong arm on which to lean, won Esther to a certain amount of domesticity and made many things in her new life comforting and joyful. Then she liked me in a way that had the charm of novelty. She looked up to me as more

practical than herself, and as having a surer judgment in worldly matters; and for the time she laid aside her own and accepted my responsibility, which was like taking breath on an uphill climb. To Joshua she had been a goddess, immaculate and absolute. Her will had been his law, and he had placed his honour in his worship and his manhood in his obedience.

'She is my Madonna,' he once said to me. 'I know no higher revelation than her will.'

Consequently she had loved him with that kind of spiritual supremacy, that kind of intellectual condescension, which had sometimes wearied her and made her long for at least equality in her companion.

'If only I could find some one who would say "No" to my "Yes"!' she said to me one day, when she had sought counsel of her husband and had received only acquiescence.

She had found in me what she had often

longed for in Joshua—that is, a strong individuality and a clear will; definite aims and sharply defined thoughts; and at the first, as I say, the novelty pleased her and she enjoyed this new phase of love and life. But——

Though by nature and temperament Esther was purely feminine, by habits of life she had become unsexed in the way of personal independence and political activities; and very soon the restrictions of home began to irk and gall. She submitted at the outset because of novelty and because of gratitude; but she submitted of her own free will, as her gift of grace, not her duty. And what she gave she felt that she could at any moment reclaim. While it was pleasant to her to be loved for her compliance rather than respected for her power and obeyed as an almost inspired autocrat, she was the very soul of sweet surrender. When it should become no longer pleasant—what then?

In the details of the house-management my wife was, of course, absolute mistress; in the general ordering I was master. That is, I demanded a well-regulated interior, good manners in the children, no debts, and neither insufficiency in the commissariat nor extravagance in the supplies. I interfered not at all in the working of these general laws; but I was firm on the main points; and I thought I was in my right to require the niceness and refinements of a gentleman's home.

For the rest, Esther was naturally unhindered. She kept her own friends and asked them to the house when she would; and I always bade them welcome and gave them good cheer. She went and came as she would, subject only to the necessary restraints of a family life, and I never questioned nor interfered. I, on my side, was as free. But soon she began to object to my friends. She wanted me to forswear them as worldly, fashionable, frivolous, un-

godly; and when I would not, she made the house so painful to them that for self-respect they could not return.

Also she began to disregard those times and rules without which no home-life can go on with comfort or decency. For an eight o'clock breakfast she would come down at ten; for a six o'clock dinner she would appear at eight: and she took it as unloving—not disrespectful, but unkind—if we sat down without her. This was disastrous for us all. For my own work it was ruinous; for the children, destructive both to their health and education. But remonstrance made matters worse, and the only way in which I could touch my wife was by a tender kind of coaxing flattery—beseeching her to do of her own free, grand, loving heart that which was the absolute obligation of her plain duty. And I ask, how is married life possible under such conditions?

Again, I had occasion to be disturbed

on account of the expense at which we lived. And yet we did not seem to live extravagantly. The lines on which our home was based were modest, and well within my income; but I had to draw largely from such savings as the furnishing of the house had left; and my hope of making provision for the future was merged in the fear that my earnings would not cover our expenditure. Money ran away like water in sand. Where did it go? This was a subject on which Esther was strangely sensitive; and I could not get her to explain how it was that we lived so simply and yet spent so lavishly. Even her hospitalities to poor patriots and penniless propagandists, large as they were, did not appear to cover that ever-increasing margin; and to this hour I do not know into what underground channel the surplus flowed.

Naturally I held that I was in my right as a partner, to put it no more strongly, to

lay it on my wife's conscience, both for my sake and her children's, to be more careful, more exact. She could not bear the mildest remonstrance on the money question, but turned back on me all that I complained of in her, and said that I was the one to blame, because of the criminally extensive base-lines on which the whole home had been constructed. Poor soul! By this time novelty had worn itself threadbare and the original stuff showed through.

She had grown weary of it all; weary of her part of wife whose husband was at the head of affairs; of her duties as housemistress, restrictive and necessitating some amount of self-sacrifice as they did; of the order and regularity of a well-conditioned home; of the need of conventional, I should say civilized, propriety, which she confounded with fashionable frivolity—of all that makes the sign-manual of gentlehood in domestic life and personal habits. So long accus-

tomed as she had been to a hand-to-mouth kind of existence, where Providence had been her bank and Chance had paid her dividends, she resented my prosaic precision as faithlessness, and accounted it to me as moral cowardice that I should take thought for the selfish things of to-morrow, when the altruistic things of to-day needed doing.

These discussions on money were the first real rifts in the lute; and they widened day by day. They precipitated the end which must have come under any conditions. For I see now that my marriage had no real element of stability in it. Unless Esther or I could have radically changed, we must have made shipwreck on one of the many rocks ahead. And though we struck first on that of my worldliness, others had to come.

There crept into our lives a certain mystery which I have never been able to

fathom. A young Pole, who was said to have escaped from prison, was brought to our house in my absence by one of my wife's political friends, and an asylum was begged for him. Who he was, what he was, what he had done there or was doing here, I did not know then and I do not know now. That he was the centre of some movement and held the strings of some plot was evident; but in what direction, and to what end, were kept from me. I only knew that he was a refugee called M. Boris, and that my wife and he had a secret together which included certain experiments in chemistry, photography, and printing—all of which were conducted in an upper room, whence I was rigidly excluded.

Some of my own possessions disappeared at this time. Letters from eminent political men which had come to me in the way of business, and two Foreign-Office passports, which had

served me in my former wanderings, were taken from my writing-table drawers, notwithstanding those patent locks which were pronounced unassailable. I never found a trace of my lost property; and when I accused M. Boris, Esther's passionate indignation was so intense as very nearly to make an end of everything. Finally she sealed my mouth by declaring that she herself had taken those papers, for what purpose she would not say. I might kill her, she said, but she would never confess.

I had nothing for it but to accept her declaration as she made it; though, as I still connected M. Boris with the affair, I insisted on it that he should leave the house. The sequel proved that I took nothing by my action. I only diverted the channel, I did not stop the outfall.

My wife's domesticity gave way as suddenly as a house of cards falls to the ground. The old fever of propagandism,

the craving for political activity, blazed out afresh. She flung up the reins, saying that all life was not centred in clean table-cloths and the accurate adding-up of butchers' bills; and that the highest duties of a faithful servant of God and lover of humanity were not to be found within the four walls of home. Any honest maid-of-all-work could do the work that she was doing now, but that for which she was specially consecrated was lying undone, with no one to take it up. Her sphere was in political morality; her duty was to preach the rights of the weaker and liberty for all the oppressed. To give to one household only, albeit her own, the energies meant for humanity at large, was desertion of her flag and infidelity to God.

In vain I argued, pleaded, rebuked, reasoned—was now, I am ashamed to say, violently angry, with all the passion and excess of my old undisciplined days, and

now as violently sorry. Esther was not to be moved; and, by this time, a distinct flavour of personal dislike to me added strength to her resolve as well as bitterness to her feelings. It was not wonderful then that she went back on the old track, the new having failed to satisfy her. In a week's time from our first stormy discussion my wife's name was placarded on all the hoardings in London, and she was announced as giving a lecture on the 16th —the subject being, 'The Down-trodden Nationalities of Europe.'

I was grieved, disappointed, humiliated and angry. I thought that my wife's affection for me should have been deeper than it proved to be; that, looking at things in the most prosaic light of reciprocity, the friendship I had had for her and hers, the help I had given them in times past, the heartiness with which I had adopted her children and done my best to benefit them, and the sincerity with which

I had sought to build up her ruined home and take her out of poverty into sufficiency, should have secured from her some consideration for me in return. I was wrong. I had not calculated on the force of that nature which, expelled with a pitchfork though it may be, is sure to come back in spite of the prongs. I had no help for it. The strong hand of a husband is all very well to talk about. What if the wife resists? You cannot lock her up, nor create a public scandal. You have to bear what you do not like, or break with her altogether. And as I was not then prepared to do this, I had to take my philosophy in both hands and make the best of things as they were—bad enough as they were in all conscience!

The dyke had broken down just as the pitchfork had failed. My wife went back to her old ways with all the keener zest, because of the cessation which had strengthened and rested her. She was every

where but at home—now in Carlisle and now in Falmouth—at Norwich one week, at Swansea another, lecturing and agitating on every conceivable subject connected with Liberal politics, but always sincere—always the Madonna doubled with the sibyl—always enthusiastic, pure, beautiful, religious and unpractical.

The home and the children were thrown entirely on my hands, and I had to do the best I could for them. The young governess, Miss Palmer, was too timid to be an efficient lieutenant and the eldest girl was too young. The house was neglected and ill-conducted; and the servants were but inadequate mistresses of affairs and unsatisfactory mistresses of themselves. When Esther was by chance at home, the place was like an office with the coming and going of many women and men, her coadjutors. When she was away she billeted on me, in her place, consecrated friends who continued the work and kept up the ball.

Finally, things came to a complete disruption, as was inevitable. My wife suddenly announced her intention of going back to the old house in Epping Forest. She must do her life's work, she said, for she knew that she was called, and that it was God's will she should abandon the flesh-pots of Egypt for the purer manna of righteousness. Our marriage, though not broken by the law—there was no cause for divorce on either side—had been a failure, a mistake, and must be in perpetual abeyance henceforward. She was sorry she had yielded to temptation and gone into the snare of worldliness with me; but she had done so unwittingly, believing that I was as whole-hearted as herself. She had found instead that I was worldly, unregenerate, Laodicean; caring more for persons than for principles; not knowing what truth meant; devoted to pleasure; greedy of praise; a traitor to the cause; shallow rather than broad; a miserable pretence

and a sham, not a reality. God had called to me as to her from the heights of Sinai, and I had knelt with the idolators and worshipped the Golden Calf rather than the Living and Eternal Jehovah. As she had expected when she had married to have found in me a faithful disciple and not a renegade to the cause of righteousness—a helper and not a hinderer—she was justified in breaking a social bond which was antagonistic to higher duties, and was both a lie and a snare. God was greater than man, and His laws were beyond ours. God called her to His work as He had called the prophets before her. And, even as Christ had forsaken father and mother, and life itself, to fulfil His Father's mission, so must she forsake me and all the material advantages of our union for her Father's work. She was testifying for the truth; and in abandoning me she was abandoning the world, the flesh and the devil, which I repre-

sented for the one part and served for the other.

All this she said with the passionate fervour of conviction; and, like Warren Hastings when he heard Burke's indictment against him, I held my breath, and wondered if what she said were indeed true.

Was I really the base and ignoble creature she painted? God knows! I was only conscious of having tried to do my day's work faithfully to be loyal to my principles and true to the light by which I walked; obedient to my conscience, and honest before God and man. When she accused me of this unfaithfulness—this moral dishonour—I remembered my Love, and what my devotion to the truth, as I had made it for myself, had cost me. And I took heart of grace to hope that I was less vile than my wife believed me to be, and that for all my many glaring faults and radical defects she had judged me below

my deserving. Rather indeed, than that she left me because she had found me too worldly and insincere to live with—I, whose marriage with her had been a sacrifice in every part, and who had not deceived her in one fact, one feeling of my whole life—I preferred to believe that she had outlived the love which had never been more than fancy. She had gone through the pleasure found in the first novelty of an assured life, and had tired of her very comforts.

She was one of those ascetic Bohemians who frankly prefer poverty and disorder to sufficiency and regularity. Give her the choice, and she would rather have a dish of herbs on a bare table than a stalled ox with glass and silver and damask as the adjuncts. All conventional proprieties irked her; and it was positive pain to her to be brought into line with the ordinary habits of the ordinary world. For though one might well deny her wisdom, no one could doubt her sincerity; and for all the

humiliation she heaped on me, I desire only to speak with respect of her.

To illustrate her wholeness of character: I remember the first evening party to which we went after we were married, when she wore an evening gown, how she blushed for shame and wept for sorrow, and could scarcely be persuaded to dress herself in what was to her the livery of sin. It was unfitting, she said; and more—it was wrong. While there was a poor woman in England who wanted a pair of shoes, she had no right to more than was absolutely necessary for decency. All superfluity was robbery; and this silk gown was a crime.

In the children's dress she allowed no ornament of any kind, and she never went beyond grey for the colour. One of our first discussions of an animated kind —not broadening into a quarrel — was, when I bought for the eldest girl a pretty kind of pink stuff I had seen in the shop-window that I thought would suit her

age and complexion. Esther refused to allow the child to wear it. The beginning of womanly evil was in personal vanity, she said; and no daughter of hers should learn to take pleasure in dress, nor think twice how she should best win admiration.

These matters, trivial as they are, show the thoroughness of her asceticism, and explain other things which perhaps lie deeper than the mere gratification of the senses. Certainly, they explain the impatience which, after a time, she felt with the order, the very beauty, of the home I had made for her; and how she went back to that barrack on the borders of Epping Forest as one suffering from nostalgia goes back to the old home.

So ended the family life to which I had grown pleasantly accustomed. The children had become as dear to me as my own; I had none of my own, and they took the place of these. I had done my best for

them in such things as I held to be vital to their interest. But since my wife had learned to despise me, she had opposed all my action with regard to them. My advice was tainted with the sin of worldly-mindedness. I was the enemy of truth and the advocate of insincerity; I was, therefore, not fit to counsel those whom she hoped to make thorough like herself. Hence, by the logic of conscientiousness, she held that she not only consulted the highest good of her children, but also that she obeyed the express will of God, when she repudiated my counsel and opposed my wishes. Wherefore I had ceased to be of good to them, and had become only a hindrance instead. I felt that it was better for her children to be brought up in the one simple atmosphere of their mother's influence, than in the storms and dissensions of two such opposing currents of thought as hers and mine had become. They were hers too; they were not mine;

and she had the most right to them. So I let her go first to the old barrack without me, where she lived after her own rules, and thence to America, where she said her life's work was to be found.

Had things been different between us, I would have thrown up everything in England, and I would have gone with her. I could have written in America as well as here, and perhaps with even better results. Had my wife still loved and respected me, even while she differed from me—had she not begun to treat me with systematic neglect and intolerable contempt—had she not thought it her duty to oppose me in everything, merely because it was I who proposed; as a saint should deny the devil, not because he offered evil, but because it was the devil who offered anything at all—had she not made her own life apart, and kept every fact in that life a profound secret from me—nor stood between me and the children, teaching them to doubt my

moral worth, my truth and sincerity, and to refuse my right of rule—I would have kept with her to the end. But a continuance of my present life was impossible, would I retain one shred of self-respect. So I bade them farewell; and they started on their voyage alone.

When my home was finally broken up and all things were swept away, I found myself possessed of only a few shillings as my sole capital. My last investment was sold to pay the last of the household bills; and the clearance was complete. I was just where I had stood twenty years ago, and had lost in my marriage the whole of my private means. This was the least of my troubles. I was strong and in the meridian of my working powers; and I could always make my way. But when I had to ask the most genial and friendly of my two chiefs for an advance of fifty pounds to float my stranded bark into serviceable waters again, I felt as if the

whole thing had been a dream, and that I was once more a boy, with all my life to make anew.

Now that time has dulled the edge of sorrow and dissolved all the bitterness in the cup, I can look back on things as they were and appreciate them at their true value. I blame my wife in nothing. We are what we are, and we cannot act differently from ourselves—at least, not for long. My wife had mistaken a passing fancy for love, and had found out her mistake by use and wear. While she liked me, she believed me good; when she ceased to care for me, she found me evil. Judged from her own point of view, she was right to repudiate me and all my works in the matter of her own life and with respect to the children. Less extreme than she, I was just by so much the farther from the grace of truth; and to keep my pace would have been consenting with sinners. She despised as sensuality and worldliness

all that I held essential to gentlehood; and she carried on to me personally the same repudiation, because I was moderately well-born and had both the habits and traditions, the likings and the fastidiousness, of a gentleman. I lost all hold on her imagination, her taste, her esteem, her love.

'You have lost your charm for me,' she said one day, quite quietly, without anger or passion. 'Joshua kept his beauty for me to the end. You have lost yours.'

Yes; I had lost all personal charm for her because I had lost all moral value; and her very repugnance to me was a proof of her own sincerity.

It was strange how deeply the loss of my home-life affected me. I had never pretended to love Esther as I had loved—as I still loved—Cordelia; nor to find in her that idealizing and poetic fascination I had found in Adeline Dalrymple. My first love had been my boyish romance; my

second the rooted reality of my manhood; but she, my wife, had been my friend, my companion, my housemate—my regard for her had been very true—and the sentiment that I had helped her in her hour of need, and done well for her fatherless children, had been one of the holiest joys of my life.

Now, when I stood alone in the desert, I knew that all this past happiness had been illusion; as I knew that all the future way must be in isolation—that I and the consciousness of disappointment must be for ever one, and that I must live in a solitude of heart more complete than any I had ever yet known. For the first time I asked myself that bitter question: Was life indeed worth the pain it brought?—Was its joy equal to its despair?

Days came and went, and weeks passed into months, like clouds over a river rather than as landmarks planted four-square on the solid ground of fact. I looked back on a mirage and forward into vacancy. The

present had no comfort, and there was no future to make amends. I was debarred from all hope of love, and I could never rebuild my wrecked and ruined home. Time was too short now to enable me to make a fortune worth having—for I was only a worker, not a speculator; and I had suddenly lost that personal ambition which had glorified my boyish dreams of success. Large as was my volume of vitality—strong as were my energies—with all my passionate determination to conquer fate and make a good thing of life and fortune—to never own that I was beaten, nor to give up the struggle while one hour's sunlight remained—the strain under which I had lived for so many years had told on me; and the disappointment of my last hopes, the frustration of my latest endeavour, completed my temporary demoralization.

I existed only. I did not live, in the true sense of the word. That is, I neither loved nor hoped. I shrank from the world

as a wounded animal creeps into the jungle. Indeed, by now I had scarcely any world from which to shrink. The advanced class and all Esther's friends condemned me for my separation; and by the fact of my marriage, and from its outset, I had given up most of my own acquaintances—or the few whom I had still retained had given me up, affronted by my wife's hostile manner when they had called to see us. So that now, save one or two intimate personal friends, I was alone. And society, like fortune, was all to be won afresh.

This stretch of backwater into which I had drifted, by turning my mind inward, brought back over me the flood of speculation which for some time now had been dammed up by action and a certain stability of negation, as well as by a great deal of positive affirmation. Ever and ever in the solitude of the evening and the stillness of the night came thronging about me those

unanswerable questions touching the meaning of the universe; the end of life; the action of the Great First Cause on this entangled web we call human history; our relations with the unseen; the ultimate evolution of the 'mind-stuff' which lies behind matter; the self-consciousness of matter; the destinies of the human race; the destiny of the individual soul; and how far the Unknown will be for ever the Unknowable—those questions which we cannot answer yet cannot stay, and which sometimes seem as if they must land the seeker in the pathless maze of madness. What did it all mean? In the wilderness we call life, who can strike the right road? In the darkness we call faith, who can come to the light?

One dominant ray had long seemed to me to be the true illumination—one unassailable fact had been my solid foothold —God! I believed in a Great First Cause, providential, intelligent, loving; to be

spiritually communicated with by prayer; informing humanity; directing history; but unrevealed, save in the mind of man and physical creation—His act and incorporate idea. I believed in the truth of the religious instinct, though all religions were equally symbolic in their structure, and their iconology was equally untrue as human fact. Buddhism was as true as Mohammedanism; Brahminism was as real as Judaism; and the Christian Trinity was no more actual than the Twelve Great Gods whom it banished from Olympus. The self-evolved purity of Buddha was like the Hidden Wisdom of Christ; and both were the outcome of that human faculty—that stream of tendency—which attains to righteousness by endeavour. The aspiration towards a higher life, the belief in a divine power, which underlies all religions alike—this was the immutable and imperishable core. The form, the name, was the mere provisional envelope.

The only advantage which one faith had over another, seemed to me to be in the relative power of expansion left to the human intellect, the liberality of its formulas, and the smallest amount of historic untruths and scientific absurdities mixed up with its theology. Hence Unitarianism had long been the nearest approach to Truth that I could find—Unitarianism founded on the Christian basis, where denial of the divinity did not include disregard for the doctrines of Christ.

But now, both solid comfort and spiritual enlightenment seemed to fail me here. One of the congregation, I was on the outside of the body and not harmonious with the teaching. That most eloquent preacher of them all, at last ceased to hold me. His sermons were poetic, beautiful, full of spiritual imagination, but there was always in them a limitation of inquiry, and that dogmatism of unproved assertion which prevented my

full assent. They assumed their premises too absolutely, and built up the conclusions too arbitrarily, where there was really no Q.E.D. Unlike science, which begins from the unit and from the two and two which makes four proves all the rest, his arguments, however clearly defined, were nebulous and unproved, though arbitrary, and you had to grant too much if you would accept the residue. And they were wanting in that human element in which Stopford Brooke, of all men, is most conspicuous. They touched the stronger passions, the more tragic pain of life, with too delicate a hand, too flimsy a sweep; and gave nor heed nor thought to the more turbulent forces of emotion. They were too etherealized for work-a-day uses; and, though on a broader basis than the Established Church, still the doctrines they taught were always theological—always treating the hypothetical as the absolute—and as if he, the preacher, were afraid of

opening issues which might admit of divergence, and the consequent wandering of the startled flock—whither?

One thing, for a time, gave me cause to doubt the justice of my own dissatisfaction and kept me longer in the congregation than else would have been. The spiritual food which did not nourish me was sufficient for Sir Charles Lyell, whose fine and thoughtful face was always to be seen in his place. Yet he was an intellectual giant where I was but a pigmy.

Since the failure of my marriage, this dissatisfaction with my spiritual state and position had been growing. That thing which I had done with so much pure religiousness of feeling—wherein I had taken counsel of the Lord and believed that I was doing His will and putting my hand to the work He had appointed me to do—that thing had fallen into ruins; and God, who had then seemed to be my

leader, had since abandoned me when most needed. No prayers had helped me, no cries for guidance, for patience, for support had been heard. During the dark days of stormy dissension which had prefaced our separation, I had turned to my God, my Father, with all the fervour and passion of my soul. I had carried to Him so much despair, so much bleeding agony of heart, that at last I dared not trust myself in church nor chapel. The passion of it all overwhelmed me with too much violence. And when such hymns as 'Nearer, my God, to Thee,' or, 'My God, my Father, while I stray,' were sung, I more than once broke down, and was too unmanned to dare a repetition of the trial. But to all my seeking I had no answer. None! none! no more than in those early days of youthful violence and unrest; and the dark solitude in which my soul had lived had been terrible and appalling.

This want of spiritual consolation as my

own experience—this seeking and not finding—gave increased stimulus to those incessant questionings on the meaning of life and the nature of God by which I was now torn as on the rack. I saw dimly the terrible end which I was nearing. I would not confess it, but I was dumbly conscious in my own soul of the result of all this frustration of endeavour. To do in faith and to fail, to cry and not be heard, to ask and not be answered, to struggle and not get free :—there was only one end possible to such a life, and that was—the abyss.

CHAPTER III.

ABOUT this time I became acquainted with certain scientists of note, and began to frequent scientific meetings as I had not done before. Hitherto I had devoted myself chiefly to politics, history, literature, and various 'views,' which it would be presumption to call philosophy; now a new wing was added to the irregularly built mansion, and science had her home with the rest.

I learned much from what I heard, and sometimes more than the speaker always intended. For the men of that time, so short a while ago, were different from

the men of the actual day; and things which are now accepted as incontestable truths were then only in the nebulous or the tentative stage, and you might or might not receive them, at your pleasure. During the last twenty or twenty-five years, science has bloomed and fructified with marvellous vigour and rapidity; but those who did not reap all they sowed, yet sowed well for others to garner. They made the running, if they did not reach the goal.

John Crawfurd was neither a synthesist nor a scientific revolutionizer. He disbelieved in the 'Aryan heresy;' would have no part in the Evolution theory; derided the idea of the Solar myth as in any way incorporated into Christianity; but his labours in ethnology, physical geography and other kindred subjects have helped on the synthesists; and the revolutionizers owe him thanks for at least the use of his shoulders. They sit so much the higher, and know so much the more, for what he has done.

Nor was Sir Roderick Murchison a name wherewith to conjure; yet the palæontologists are indebted to him as much as if the calibre of his mind had been equal to the quality of his discovery, and as if he had been as intellectually great as he was scientifically fortunate. But with him, more than any other scientist of his time, the worth of the work he did was incommensurably beyond himself. It was like the finding of a buried jewel by a child scratching in the garden. The jewel was priceless, but the child had not searched with the intelligence of a mining engineer, and when he had unearthed the treasure his brain was no nearer in weight nor value to that of the engineer than it had been before.

Again, Robert Chambers, though a brave pioneer in the making of the new road, and one of the first to speak the new language, was in a certain sense pre-scientific. He was the dawn but not the full day. He still accepted for granted things which were

not proved nor capable of proof—*e.g.* spiritualism; and the poetry of his nature, while it added beauty to his intellect, took from the rigid value of his evidence. Still, he saw the true shapes of things, if he did not fill in all the details with perfect accuracy; and his 'Vestiges of Creation'—which we may now take for granted was his—will take rank for ever as one of the advanced guard in the forces of knowledge as they stand arrayed against those of ignorance.

In cataloguing my memories of twenty or twenty-five years ago, I see the enormous span which science and free-thought have thrown across the abyss of ignorance and superstition. Twenty-five years ago, Mill's definition of liberty was not the household word it is now. The doctrine that exact laws could be applied to that inconstant quantity, man; laws of averages as precise as mathematics; laws of economic results as certain as chemical combinations; laws

governing human conduct and forming the science of sociology as unalterable as those which govern the course of the planets and form the science of astronomy;—this was a new page in the great Book of Life, which many found too hard to read;—and Herbert Spencer's laurel-crown was still growing on the bushes.

Twenty-five years ago too, our greatest man of all, the true epoch-maker and torch-bearer of this century, he to whom our age owes its characteristic value—Charles Darwin—was in the first of the two stages which every original thinker and revolutionizing discoverer has to pass through. He had a few choice adherents who believed in him; but the learned public disputed his conclusions, the unlearned derided his facts, and the theological remnant denounced him as a lying teacher of iniquity.

Now he is in the second phase—accepted as an expositor of common-places:—'What every ploughboy knew generations ago,' as

said to me, contemptuously, a certain Roman Catholic Professor, on the action of worms as set forth in one of the last books.

Between Darwin and Sir Charles Lyell—the 'Antiquity' and the 'Descent' of man—however, the cosmogony dear to this Professor and others of his creed becomes a handful of dry dust. When the tip of one of Prince Rupert's drops is broken off, what becomes of the body? So in regard to the old cosmogony; on which other things, held to be more vital, hang like grapes on a severed vine-branch.

In those days Haeckel and Huxley were not the powers they are now, and Owen was in his zenith. In that famous dispute between these last two, about the hippocampus minor, how well I remember my eager advocacy of our poor relation, and how I rejoiced in the firm, bold arguments of the younger man! My state of mind was conviction, not knowledge; but the want of knowledge did not lessen my ardour of conviction.

Darwin first, and then the spectroscope, opened a new world to me, and one which redressed the balance and recompensed me for all the sufferings and shortcomings of the old. The Unity of Nature was the core of the creed to which I owe my subsequent mental progress—the Doctrine of Evolution that by which I have come to peace. The fact that we have advanced so far already makes all the future possible, and reduces pessimism to an absurdity; and the consciousness of fixed laws robs history of all its elements of doubt, incompleteness and partiality. It makes infinite amelioration dependent on man's clear and understanding will; and shows how, by the scientific evolution of morals, systems of government, laws of health, physical well-being and education, we can accomplish things which hitherto have been only the dreams of poets and the fantasies of artists.

Sir Charles Lyell's book had also an immense influence on me; so had Hugh

Miller's 'Testimony of the Rocks'; for all that this last touched the old faith with as tender and reverent as he grasped the new truths with a strong and manly hand. Sir Charles was in a different category. He was not one of those who 'builded better than he knew,' for he looked his own conclusions fairly in the face, and accepted in its integrity every word of the writing on the living scroll which unrolled itself before his eyes. Max Müller's work again was among the charms of my existence in those days. I remember what Grote's 'History of Greece' was to me; also the joy that I took in Kinglake's 'Eothen,' and, when it appeared, many years later, in his 'History of the Crimea.' George Henry Lewes's books added to the general sum of mental content; and George Eliot, just stepping to the front, was a goddess behind a cloud. But a new novel by Georges Sand out-ran hers; and a poem by Mrs. Browning was looked on as an event greater than either.

Still, I had not so much interest in pure literature as I had in science. In the former almost everything had been already said. From Æschylus to Shakespeare and onwards, not many thoughts had been left untouched; but in science were FACTS, and these were of the kind to make a new mental era—a new departure of thought for the whole world, as well as for myself individually.

It was all in the air. The emancipation of the human intellect from superstition in the substitution of the scientific method for the theological, was the great event of the time and made itself felt everywhere. Brute absolutism and unreasoning authority were set aside in matters intellectual as they had already been in things social, legal, governmental. That which bestrode the reason was flung off into the dust; and even the Church followed with the rest. 'Essays and Reviews' had brought on its authors the honour of ecclesiastical condem-

nation; and Colenso's book, which is now a mere letter in the alphabet of destructive criticism, had been stamped in gold by Convocation as 'full of errors of the gravest and most dangerous kind.' And yet how far short it falls of both De Wette and Norton!

Colenso himself was as clear and precise as his arithmetic; and his thoughtful, handsome, refined face was always a beautiful point in the bald-headed crowd at the Ethnological and Royal Societies, where Sir Edward Belcher and Sherrard Osborne sat side by side like two mastiffs unmuzzled. I used to wonder if what I had been told was true, that Captain Belcher had once been forcibly prevented from hanging Sherrard Osborne up to the yard-arm; and, to indemnify himself for his disappointment, had brought him home in irons.

Strauss's 'Leben Jesu' had long been known to the English reading public, thanks to the fine translation by Marian Evans,

whose first knot in the quipos of her fame was made by this work. The ripple raised by the 'Creed of Christendom' yet ran to the shore; and Newman's 'Soul,' as well as his 'Sins of the House of Hapsburg,' were moving forces in the world which his brother's 'Apologia' and reliance on authority have not arrested in later years.

'Ecce Homo' and Renan—still later—have given pregnant cause for thought and divergence; but these have not roused the anger which has been caused by coarser and more personal attacks, such as Winwood Reade's 'Martyrdom of Man' and Colonel Ingersoll's leaflets; and Lockyer's popularization of astronomy, with the results of the spectroscope, have lifted freethought into a purer because wholly impersonal atmosphere, and brought the witness of unification against the doctrine of direct and separate creation. Those Friday Evening Lectures at the Royal Institution, when Tyndall experimented or Huxley demon-

strated—or haply William Spottiswoode or Lockyer tried to bring things ethereal and celestial visibly before our eyes — what evenings in the Court of Paradise those were! How I pitied the poor wretches who did not come to them! Contrast a Queen's Ball and a Friday Evening Lecture —the nothingness of the one and the glorious communion of the other! I do not think there was one in the whole audience who drank in the wine of scientific thought with more avidity than I. Did my own ignorance make that wine but froth? Perhaps. All the same, it strengthened, warmed, exhilarated and almost intoxicated me.

What a glorious time it was! Everywhere the ground was being broken up in preparation for the great superstructure which has been raised as by an enchanter's wand. Everywhere was a shaking of the dry bones, and the clothing of flesh and sinew on what had been dead and useless fragments buried in the earth. In art and

science, in literature and theology alike was a confused noise of Life and of the forces which ran together. It was the birth-hour of a new Truth; and more than a few shepherds heard the heralding Voices which announced it. At no time in our history have the mental activities of England been so vigorous as they were now. And to me also, as I have said, came the Promise—which at first I did not rightly understand—and from the desert where I stood I looked over to the fertile land which as yet lay only faintly outlined in the dawning light.

My meeting with John Crawfurd brought me into contact with the long, long ago, and made one of those loops in life which are so full of beauty and interest. When we were young, and while we lived at our father's place in Kent, we were much mixed up with three beautiful girls who lived not more than a mile or so from us. All lovely, yet very different, each was strongly individualized. The eldest

might have been her namesake of Troy. The second was bright, vivacious, playful, a kind of English-speaking Euphrosyne; and the youngest was the sweetest, gentlest, dearest of them all. We called her Dudù, for indeed she was a very sleepy Venus, and thinner she might have been and yet not lose. She and my beloved brother Godfrey made a summer day's excursion into that enchanted wood of fruitless love, whence is no issue save by tears and the heart-rending of separation. I was a child at the time; but the early friendship of the families, and the romance of this love-affair which we all knew, made it very delightful to me to foregather again with those who were left of these dear people. My new old friend, John Crawfurd, had married the eldest sister of all—one of the most regal and empress-like women I have ever seen—whom I can distinctly remember as one would remember a queen.

There were other members of the family

with whom I was also brought in contact. Let me recall the image of that gracious Lady, just returned from the Drawing-room, as she stood there by the sofa, in her court dress of blue and white and pearls, receiving her guests with the grace and ease, the dignity and the courtesy, of a young queen on her own account. Of all women known to me, Lady —— has the most perfect manner. And it is not only manner. Her heart is as kind as her ways are gracious, and she has proved the worth of her moral courage in more ways than one.

The Dudù of past times has mellowed into a bit of perfection of her kind. The indolent grace of girlhood has become the soft serenity of age, and the sweet temper of the sunny morning has raised itself into the pious pity, the womanly compassion, which makes the evening of life so beautiful, so blessed! Never an old friend lost, and new ones gathering round

her, attest her sweetness and give warranty for love.

When John Crawfurd ended his long and honoured life, more than I lost a friend whom to know was to love, to respect, to look up to—a man who, if not one of the world's leaders, yet was one of the world's helpers—a man who had done his day's work gallantly and well, and whose character was as sterling as his intellect. No truer soul ever lived than he; no kinder, juster, nor more faithful friend and father. His tall and powerfully built figure, just touched by the hand of time, and slightly, very slightly, bent—his handsome face with the eyes still bright, vivacious, penetrating, where the lightning-lines of latent passion flashed across the sweeter and more placid tracts—his noble, white-haired head, and that look of a man who has won all along the line, and who enjoys and does not regret—all made him one of the most striking features of the learned societies

where no one was commonplace. And when he went, a power passed out of those where he had been most often seen, and had had most influence, which left them flavourless—at least to those who had loved him.

So in these late years, when William Spottiswoode died so long before his time, the world lost more than it will easily regain. Mr. Spottiswoode was perhaps the most ideal of all the scientists. Fortune and place, beauty of person and refinement of mind, an intelligence that somehow reminded one of polished steel, and a character as free from base alloy as gold that has been tried in the fire—we do not often find such a combination as this devoted to the furtherance of pure science and to the good of his fellow-men. And now all these forces are dissolved, lost for ever to man and gone into limitless space. And yet they are not lost. The work he did lives after him and is his truest immortality.

I was in no way up to his subjects—none but the higher mathematicians were; but I could understand something of what he said. I remember specially a lecture of his on crystals, and how he seemed to indicate that crystals were on the border-land of consciousness—just below the plastic assimilation and active conversion of protoplasm, but beyond the unchangeable rigidity of metals. That lecture was also one of the starting-points of new thought to me—a nucleus whence my mind branched out like one of the crystals spoken of.

How many of our good men have been taken! James Spedding was one who touched the crown of the ideal student, whose justness of judgment was on a par with his sweetness of nature, whose intellectual force was matched by his serenity, his patience, his self-mastery, his purity. In the midst of the violent clashings caused by the arbitrary and contradictory dogmatisms which afflict and bewilder us, his quiet breadth,

his god-like serenity and all-embracing liberalism, were as refreshing as silence after uproar, as shade in the noonday heat. The way in which he died was the crowning act of a life that had never known bitterness, revenge, nor any strain whatever of the darker passions; and were the world of thought to have its saints, James Spedding would be one of the first canonized.

Very different were the Amberleys, who also were as grievous a loss to the world, though standing on such a different platform. They carried a more complete integrity of purpose and wholeness of action into their ideas than any of their class known to me; and the brief meteor-like brilliancy of their lives is a subject to me of enduring regret. It would have been well for men and women had they lived and matured; even though they had changed front and taken a new shape. They were too young and eager as things were to have much influence, and their very

wholeness, by the slight exaggeration and want of tact which it included, made fewer proselytes than opponents.

Edward Flower, the handsome Jupiter whose humanity went over to horses after the issue of slavery was closed by emancipation—he also was a man of public note of the time; and he too was thorough. In the early days of the American Civil War, before the introduction of emancipation by the North—the playing of the black knave as the trump card—I was on the side of the South. I took their part because of the Right of Insurrection which I had always upheld. As all of us who were Liberals had sympathized with the revolution in Italy, and the desire of the independent States to consolidate themselves into one kingdom, so we now sympathized with the States in America which desired to get rid of their Union, and to form themselves into a separate nation. I could not see any difference between the two. In both it was the will

of the people that I respected—uninfluenced by the differences of aim.

One day I said this to Edward Flower, as we stood on the hearthrug before dinner was announced; and he very nearly ordered me out of the house, instead of giving me the place at his table destined for me. I think he would have done so, had not Moncure Conway come to the rescue. He defended me, from my own point of view. He condemned that point of view in itself, and showed where it was part crooked and part short-sighted, but, granting my premises as honestly held, he could not see that I was to be condemned. Thus he calmed down the towering wrath of our Jupiter Mecænas, and things went on velvet from the soup to the grapes. But I had skirted by a very unpleasant bit of coast, where I nearly made shipwreck of an old and valued friendship.

Perhaps the two greatest losses to the world—making a wide leap onward; but

this chapter deals so much with the honoured dead!—have been the deaths of Clifford and Balfour. Each had showed only a sample of his quality. Neither had done his day's work nor come to the meridian of his power. When Darwin died, he had lived. He had fulfilled his appointed mission, and planted his Tree of Life fathoms deep in the soil of human thought and knowledge. But these two young men went down to the grave before they had more than begun their assigned tasks; and their slips of the great Yggdrasil, by which heaven and earth are bound together, withered in the darkness of their untimely death. It fills one with sorrow to think what great things each might have done, and the loss to the world through their incompleted lives!

All this is a very fragmentary notice of the intellects which then were in their vigour or their promise and now have sunk below the horizon. But I am not writing a history of my own times, nor

speaking of things and people with whom I had no relation. I am only writing of those with whom I came in contact personally or intellectually, and who were either friends through love or masters through influence.

As my mind recovered its lost tone by the admission of a new interest, and science worked out the scars left by disappointment, I found a new zest in the work I had never ceased to love. I went as a free-lance under the banner of my old chief, though I never saw him again; and I wrote what struck and made its mark on the things of the time. But my connection with this paper brought me more obloquy than praise. I had something to say, and I said it with what literary force and moral vigour I possessed, indifferent to personal consequences, as I have always been, and as I must ever be now to the end. And those at whom I struck were naturally indignant, and gave me back blow for blow, sometimes hitting below the belt,

with even a few odd scratchings thrown in.

At this time my portion was a strange mixture of literary kudos and personal enmity. I was publicly cut by irate partisans, and no one seemed to think it possible that I had a conscience and was not merely an 'advocatus diaboli,' opposing that which I knew to be good and bolstering up that which I knew to be evil. But I lived through it, and got good out of it. For I do not think anything enlarges the sympathies or humanizes the mind more than undue condemnation. By what we suffer experimentally we can measure the pain of others; and the injustice which we have to accept we are careful not to pass on.

Besides independent essays, all more or less dealing with one social subject only, I did a great deal of reviewing for the paper. And as I was notoriously beyond fear or favour, I was trusted with the books of my known friends as well as with those of

strangers and new writers. My work was always to me impersonal. I said what I honestly thought of the book as an achievement, and no personal sympathy with, nor hostility to, the writer turned me one hair's-breadth to either side. I put my honour in keeping up the high standard of excellence for which the paper in question was then famous. If a book reached that standard, I praised it; if it did not, I condemned it—and who wrote it did not count. This might have been the work of a stranger, that of a friend—to either circumstance I was indifferent; and the personal favour I have not looked for, nor had shown to myself, I never gave to others. I know no other way of dealing with things than on their own merits; and I should care neither to receive for myself, nor to help others to obtain, that ephemeral reputation which is due to private patronage and not to the worth of the work done.

I remember one Sunday dining at the

house of a clever woman who disbelieved in the general honesty of the press. I had just reviewed a book which she had not read; but she knew the young authoress personally, and believed that she could not have written anything worthy of these encomiums—that no good could come out of this little corner of Nazareth. During dinner the conversation turned on the corruption and venality of the press, and she instanced this notice, which had appeared the day before in the ——, as an example.

'That review must either have been paid for, or it was done by a personal friend,' she said. 'In neither case was it an honest criticism.'

'Neither one nor the other,' I answered. 'I know who wrote it, and I give you my word of honour that the reviewer had never heard the name of the authoress before he received her book, nor was the faintest indication given him of the tone to be taken. It was reviewed on its own merits only.'

For my own part, I can only say that I know nothing of the venality of the press so often spoken of. One hears of ten pounds paid for this favourable notice and ten pounds paid for that; but I take it these sums are like poor Dr. Ashburner's bank-notes brought by the strange man on a black horse, and never existed outside the region of imagination. So far as I know, those come worst off who attempt to influence to their own favour the authorities in chief or the workers in detail of any paper that respects itself.

I know an editor on whom one day called, unintroduced, a lively scribbler. She had just finished a flashy book, which she was not content to leave to be judged of according to its merits, but thought her social standing should be brought into play as a kind of extra lever whereby her work should be hoisted into notice. When she sent up her card—Lady Fourstars—to one who was only a plain Mister and

who lived by his pen, while she got just so much more social consideration by hers, and when, after a few moments' conversation, she asked him to dine with her next day, she expected to have made a supple courtier in the place of an incorruptible judge, and to have bought his favourable suffrages.

The refined scholar who then held the reins of that special journal was revolted by the cynicism of this effrontery; and the lively scribbler gained nothing by her audacity. Her book was dealt with in the ordinary way of business, and neither condemned for spite nor praised for complaisance.

Officially inflexible, personally courteous, this editor, and one other, were models of their calling—past-masters in their craft. Neither ever betrayed his trust to his proprietors, and neither ever offended even the most susceptible of his unsuccessful contributors. Of one—my dear friend, whose loss we still deplore—it used to be said that it

was pleasanter to be rejected by him than accepted by many others. For there are editors and editors; and not all are pleasant to deal with. Some bully you, even when you do your best and your article has the place of honour. They think it due to their own dignity, and a useful check on your vanity, to keep your soul low like a weaned child; to cut down your presumptuous imagining that you are necessary to the paper; to make you understand that they could find a dozen as good as you, and half-a-dozen better, to take your place an hour after you had vacated it. Others are dumb dogs who neither growl nor caress. They say nothing of praise nor blame, and let you know you suit only by silent acceptance. Others again, give you heartening words of encouragement when you fail, and the reward of commendation when you do well. They keep the whole thing alive and healthy by their own vitality, and their contributors add personal zeal to their intel-

lectual efforts. These are the best editors. They get by far the most out of their staff; and when they go their place is not readily filled—if indeed it ever is!

But editors are a long-suffering race too, and have their trials like meaner mortals. Not all their young lions roar fitly and in tune; and sometimes, when most wanted, they skulk and do not roar at all. Or they launch the paper into hot water by rash utterances, and the editor has to pay in his own person for the debt of libel incurred by them. That large crowd of ungrammatical folk who believe in private influence rather than in the worth of the work done—who write silly books, then tout for favourable notices—who think that any rubbish whatsoever can be floated by a liberal supply of champagne given to editors and reviewers—and who trust to every reed but good English and something to say for their staff of literary fame—they make one of the many nuisances besetting the editorial chair.

Another is that analogous crowd of incapables who ask for undesignated work without giving the flimsiest rag of performance to certify capacity. They think that a publisher's office is like a charitable kitchen, where are always to be found baskets full of broken meat, and where no other qualification than need is necessary for a share of what is going; or that publishers and editors are so many Michael Scotts, who have to supply their demons with work, to save themselves from being torn to pieces. If either idea were true, there might be some sense in the quest. But, seeing that for every loaf there are two claimants, and far more ropes twisted out of sea-sand than any wizard can stow away in his columns, these uncovenanted outsiders have but a poor claim. And were even the editorial business conducted in this centrifugal way, which it is not, their chances would not be worth betting on. As things are, where I pray you is their peg?

CHAPTER IV.

I HAD known for some time the ordinary Jews of London Society. I had begun with Mrs. Ben Israel, the little woman who bought her social steps by private gifts, graduated in value according to the condition of the person whom she wished to be seen in her drawing-room, and in whose, in her turn, she herself wished to be seen. This was only according to sound commercial principles. But the two queer things in the transaction were the accurate account which she kept of her gifts under the head of 'Charities,' and the way in which she raised the money for them. She borrowed it of young married

people on the faith of a will to be made in their favour, wherein she promised to leave sundry Cashmere shawls and rare old laces worth thrice the value of the loan; or to put down the name of their child for double the amount in money. I do not know how many of these wills she had not made, unknown to her husband. After her death, they turned up like stereotyped copies of a bad joke; and who got the initial bequest, or if anyone got anything at all, is also unknown to me.

The sum she borrowed was generally three hundred pounds. This lasted her for a year or two and went in the purchase of the presents—or, if we give things their right names and call spades spades—these bribes for social consideration. She showered them right and left. They were chiefly bits of embroidery very beautifully done, such as handkerchiefs, shirt-fronts, waistcoats, blotting-books and the like, which she said she herself worked in the solitude

of her own room on those off-days when she did not receive. Our then greatest living novelist came in for a fine flowered waistcoat, which she presented to him as her own work and a tribute of admiration. She had paid for it at a shop; and I saw the entry in her book, which one day she showed me. Again, a favourite gift was a bit of her old inherited lace, of which she had a goodly store on the back shelves of the bric-à-brac shops.

As her husband objected to this crazy application of their income, and would not give her an allowance to cover this quite unnecessary margin, she raised the necessary funds in the way I have said. And only when she died did her several victims find out the practical joke that had been played on them, and learn the true value of the legacy which was to have been rich enough to go twice round the original loan.

This lady was monstrously proud of her birth. She, Spanish—her husband Arabian

—both were of the tribe of Judah, she used to say, stiffening her small person. All the English and German Jews were her inferiors, being of the tribe of Benjamin; and she looked down on them with the traditional contempt of the elder branch for the cadet.

Her drawing-room was filled with the literary and artistic celebrities of the day. She might have been the model for Mrs. Leo Hunter, had the portrait not been taken before her time from that poor lady whose husband, not content with being well, wished to be better and came to ruin as the consequence. Had our small daughter of Judah been a social circumstance before Pickwick put on his gaiters, the cap would have fitted to a nicety; and her luxuriant shining black hair, of which she was not unreasonably proud, would have received its deserved aureole.

She forbade her step-daughters, whom she frankly disliked, to come down to her

parties. As she would not have allowed them to marry Gentiles, she said, she thought it her duty to keep them out of harm's way. Yet one of these step-daughters was a widow with children; and so far one would have thought able to judge for herself, as well as entitled to the run of the society assembled in her father's house, where also she lived. But my friend did not keep well with her family. Neither her husband nor his daughters, neither the grandchildren nor the governess pleased her; and her details concerning the various thorns which bestrewed her conjugal pillow were embarrassing to hear.

They were pleasant evenings which the little woman made; and she was both a generous and an attentive hostess. Her suppers, where was always cold fish cooked Jewish fashion, were models of good taste and liberality; and there was that evident desire to give pleasure which makes its mark and sets people at

their ease. Her company was certainly on the whole somewhat of a 'scratch lot;' not so odd as Mrs. Hulme's queer menagerie had been, but undoubtedly a little mixed. And people did wild things in her house, as they do in places where the rule is relaxed and they feel themselves delivered from social restraints. But we all felt it was going beyond the broadest line of the loosest social stepper when a certain editor—a man whom nothing daunted, and to whom notoriety was fame and singularity distinction—came late into her rooms, on one of her most brilliant evenings, in a frock coat, a crumpled shirt, a black necktie rather awry, and muddy boots.

We did not meet many of her own nation at my friend's house, and only those of good birth, remarkable gifts, or exceptional position. Against the ordinary Jew of large wealth and small beginnings, superb diamonds and defective grammar, she was as exclusive as the most exclusive Christian

could have been. She would never allow those she liked to be called Jews in her presence; only 'Israelites,' or the 'Nation.' Those whom she did not like, she herself stigmatized as 'low Jews.' Notwithstanding her social infidelity, she was a strict conformist, and, when the Feast of Tabernacles was about, she and her family lived in green-covered huts built up in the back-garden. She would have thought it a sin to have eaten other than 'cosher' meat; but between the two she would not have preferred martyrdom to pork nor even shrimps.

This 'cosher' meat, by the way, beyond its undoubted merit of superior wholesomeness, still remains as a sign and symbol of true godliness among the Nation. Or perhaps it were better to say as a fact which in itself is godliness. I know of one worldly old fellow who, thinking how he could best make his peace with Jehovah, whom he 'imagined' he had offended because

his health and strength had decayed, found nothing more pleasing as an act of submission and holiness than the vow never to eat ordinary meat again, but to be strict and faithful to the cosher butcher and the cosher beef. This little instance shows how deep-rooted in human nature is that mental state we call fetishism.

After our kind little hostess, this black-haired daughter of Judah, had gone to her rest, I got to know more members of the great Semitic family; some of whom I dropped because I did not care for them, while others I count still as among my dearest friends, and love with enthusiasm. There are people whose personality overshadows their nationality. When with them you never ask whether they are Jews or Christians, English or German. You only know that they are clever, brilliant, trustworthy, high-minded, beautiful; that you would trust your fair fame and fortune in his hands—your happiness and self-respect

in hers; that their society is a lovely charm, their friendship a great gift; and that you have to live beyond your follies if you would be worthy of their virtues. Such as these I have known for some time now; also others who are not up to this height, but are just on a level with the current idea of ordinary Jews; but the quiet, home-staying, Gentile-renouncing Jew was a new experience which came to me at a time when the ferment was again beginning in my mind, and which helped on that ferment to a subsidence very different from what was intended.

In admitting me into their home these religious Jews did me signal honour. Unlike those whose great social aim is to be received by Christians of good standing and old family, these shrink from us still, as Gentiles to whom has been given truly the power of dominion, as was of old time given to the Egyptians, but who are ever outside the courts of Jehovah; while His

sons, whom He chasteneth, are His own, even while He punishes and afflicts. And His punishments are mercies in disguise—means of holding them to the truth and of confirming them in faithfulness and righteousness.

I have always done my best to put myself on the outside of things, and to judge of my own standpoint as it would appear to others. If this weakens tenacity it strengthens liberality; and the thinking world knows now that the latter is better than the former in all matters of unprovable speculation, inasmuch as it is the result of that wider knowledge of men and things which makes the whole difference between cosmopolitanism and parochialism. But I confess it startled me as much as if I had received a blow in my face when I first talked with one of these religious Jews—a man as learned as he was pious—and heard him say:

'We are in truth a living miracle—pre-

served by God as a perpetual protest against your idolatry.'

'Idolatry!'

I cried out against the word with a strange sense of pain and desecration. I had long ceased to believe in the Divinity of Christ, but I had that kind of tender reverence for the faith of my childhood, that kind of theological patriotism, so to speak, which made me shrink as if touched with hot iron, when an alien, an outsider, laid a rude hand on its mysteries.

'What is it but idolatry?' asked my friend quietly. 'What else can you call the religion of you Christians, which makes a human being of that Incommunicable God—that Supreme Deity—the Great Spirit of the universe, Jehovah our Lord, whom we Jews worship in spirit and in truth? You pray to a man who, you say, was God Incarnate. You worship one who lived and died a man like yourselves, and who is still a man to you now in Heaven—specially

moved to listen to human prayers because of His own human experiences on earth. But we hold that no one has seen God at any time, and that He to whom we pray is beyond all sense. God has been incarnate in man no more than in the Egyptian bull; and your worship of Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph and Mary, is as pure idolatry —that is, the worship of a created and finite being—as was ever the faith which made Apis a divine Incarnation and Dagon a God in whom were light and life and power.'

I repeat these words because of the new view they may give to others who have not thought out the matter for themselves. It is always useful to see ourselves as others see us, and Christians never realize the anthropomorphism of their religion, nor remember that the universal Saviour was but a man, subject to all the limitations of humanity, and that even now He is but the Divine Man deified. Nor do they ever

reason out their belief in the Trinity—in those Three Persons and One God; nor ask: Was it always so?—was, as I asked Henry Grahame, that part of the Godhead which afterwards became Christ, always the Divine Man He is now?—or was the essence split and made tripartite when Mary conceived?

To say these things are mysteries is to give no answer at all. Things which come to us through human media, are, I repeat it, to be justly judged of by human reason; and when they are unreasonable they are as justly rejected.

My friend also predicted the persecution against his people which had not then begun, but of which he saw the certainty, as God's way of rebuking the pride, ostentation, laxity and luxury, which had crept in among them. These vices had to be scourged out of them, he said, if they were still to be the Chosen People. He did not speak from political foresight; but only on religious

grounds and in faith—believing that the Israelites were, and are, in very truth the Chosen People, and that all which happens to them comes directly from God. When the German Juden-Hetze began, followed as it has been by the still more shameful barbarities of Russia and the late disgraceful trial in Hungary, I remembered what my friend had said.

But I was none the more convinced of the Presidential Authority of God in these matters than in some others. Natural causes, arising from racial, ceremonial and religious separation—from anti-national tribalism, so that a man is first an Israelite and then a German or an Englishman—from those classes of business which gather in and do not produce, taking from the hoards of others but not adding to the general store—from a specialized financial faculty, so that they get the better of the slower European intellect—these natural causes are sufficient to account for all that

has been of late, without calling in the aid of the Divine Hand.

For their earlier persecutions we want only the reasons that (1) The Jews amassed portable wealth by the very same methods as those by which they amass it now, namely, that specialized financial faculty already spoken of, which takes advantage of the duller brains and profits by the more wasteful habits of Christians. (2) They had no country, with ambassadors to represent them and an army to retaliate when they were evilly entreated. They were the orphans of the world. And that brutal, blustering, ferocious world treated them as undefended orphans have ever been treated.

Between their own self-consecration, however, and the repudiation of Christendom, the poor Jews are in a state of very unstable equilibrium. Held by themselves as miraculously preserved to be the unflinching witnesses of the truth and worshippers of the one God—by Christians they are

looked on as a standing miracle evidencing the wrath of God, who has hardened their hearts so that they shall neither repent nor believe. Thus they shall be always (righteously) punished for the sins of those few who, nearly two thousand years ago, shouted 'Release unto us Barabbas'—the sins of the fathers being visited on the children, according to the Mosaic word. What would have become of the world if this predestined Atonement had not been consummated never troubles those who believe and do not reason. Nor does it come into the order of Christian logic to prove that, far from persecuting, we ought to honour and reward, those by whom this salvation of the world came about.

If only all these theological fantasies could be abolished on both sides, and the whole question treated on its merits!—if only men would cease to be theosophists and learn to be brothers! Ah, then we should have the true millennium, wherein the spirits of Intolerance, Spiritual Pride and

Ignorance pranking itself as knowledge, would be effectually and for ever chained!

The first Friday night supper—which is the Judaic Sabbath first meal—to which I was invited by my new friend, also greatly interested me because of the initial ceremony, when the master of the house, in his quality of head of the family and consequently domestic priest, blessed the bread and wine, which then he distributed to those who 'sat at meat' about the table. The prayer of blessing was said in Hebrew—all sitting—the men covered, the women as they were. Here was the origin of the Lord's Supper in the Christian Church—the rite which had been practised by the Israelites long before the birth of Christ and for ever after—the homely and familiar 'blessing of the elements' which Christians have adopted, and in their adoption have forgotten the source and claimed the sole monopoly of usage.

Who, in reading the account of the last Supper, ever realizes that Jesus was only

doing that which every master of a house was doing at the same time throughout Judea? — which every Jew has always done, from the time of the Babylonian captivity onward, and still does in every house all over the world where the master is a faithful believer and not a backslider? Who, among ordinary Christians, does not imagine the whole thing to have been specially ordered and ordained—from the verbal blessing to the esoteric meaning and mystic grace still preserved in the observance? It was a strange bit of enlightenment to me. It had for me the same effect in a minor degree, as I imagine the bodily presence of Christ, just as He lived and thought and talked in those early days of pre-scientific ignorance, would have on the cultured Englishman of the present day. It was bringing the mystic ideal, the symbolic grace, down to the hard and fast lines of realism; and when imagination runs dry at the source, enthusiasm fails at

the outfall. It took from the celebration of the Lord's Supper all its eucharistic character, and replaced it among the simple every-day human events of which we know the whole genesis, and in which is neither mystery nor sanctity. It was seeing the future King as a new-born naked babe, for whom only a woman's care and a flannel blanket are needed, and before whom the obeisance of sages and philosophers is a farce.

Knowing my new friends ever more intimately, I saw ever more clearly the greater strictness of parental authority and the more dignified tone of their domestic life, as compared with our own looser code. The sons had none of the familiar slang common to our boys. The father was 'father' or 'sir,' not 'the governor,' nor 'the pater,' nor 'the old man,' nor 'the boss.' The girls, in their turn, were more obedient to the mother, less fast, less emancipated, more domestic and more retiring than ours. The whole tone struck me as—unhappily—archaic, with a

little dash of Quaker quietism to intensify the disciplinary spirit. I liked it.

In my own person I had become more than tolerant of all failings which are temperamental rather than deliberate and intentional vices. I never reached the cynical indifference of my old friend Mrs. Hulme, who forgave all things base and bad, because human nature was such a corrupt concern from ground-plan to summit, she expected nothing better. Deceit, treachery, moral cowardice, cruelty, lying, dishonour in money-matters, I held in horror as I have always done. But faults of passion, the ebullition of a strong nature, the excesses of large vitality, seemed and seem to me to belong to another category; and the overpowering force of the physical conditions, of which they are the result, takes from them the evil of deliberate and conscious intention. All the same, I reverenced and admired the gentle and self-restraining virtues when I found them—

those sweet domestic graces which make all the value of home; and I bear willing testimony to the fact that I found these in more abounding perfection in the homes of the religious Jews than elsewhere.

'A Jewish wife seldom troubles her husband's house,' said one of my friends to me one day, unconsciously using a pure Orientalism of speech when discussing the comparative fidelity of wives—Jewish and Christian. And:—

'Unchastity before marriage is a thing almost unknown among Jewish girls of good education,' said another, discussing the strange phenomenon of those emancipated women who demand equal rights with men, and discard all the duties of women; who desire knowledge without its consequences, pleasure without its penalties, privileges without their obligations, love without the restraints of matrimony or the self-sacrifice of maternity; and who make no distinction between the sexes—

seeing no difference between that which is allowed by nature to the one and denied by the best arrangements of society to the other.

Most of us know something of the close solidarity of national feeling among the Jews, proved, inter alia, by the magnificence of their charities, their boundless kindness to their own poor, and the care with which the powerful watch over the interests of the humble. The zealous endeavour to secure a liberal secular education, as well as good religious instruction, for all their poor, and to redeem their young waifs and strays from perdition, is a marked feature of Jewish tribal life everywhere. We also know how learned are their learned men—how to the forefront everywhere is the Jew. In art, science, philosophy, literature, finance—of itself a science—we have to acknowledge the value of the bright Semitic intellect. No hewers of wood nor drawers of water are they; no helots nor serfs; but quick, bril-

liant, irrepressible, they overcome all hostile circumstances and rise to the top in spite of every effort to destroy them.

And we must always remember that these people dwell among us, and know us.

When we think of all this, we may understand a little better than some blind enthusiasts will or can, the mingled folly and impertinence of our costly 'Missions to the Jews,' our 'Societies for the Conversion of Jews,' and the like. The Jews live in the midst of Christian communities, and have ample means of judging the working results of Christian doctrines in the morality, the philanthropy, the self-respect and education of all classes. If they saw that the Universal Brotherhood, which Christ taught as the foundation of all faithful human action, gave more satisfactory working results than their own tribal solidarity—well and good. If they saw that we were more sober, more chaste, more humane, more generous than they, more liberal and more

intellectual, they might then think that we had got hold of a higher law than any they know; and that popes, cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, were indeed better priests and leaders than Moses and the Rabbis. But when they give us hospitals and we confine them in Ghettos—when the compatriots of Spinoza, Heine, Mendelssohn, institute the Juden-Hetze, and Rome, the chief seat of Christendom, persecutes them within our own times—when it is only within the limits of the present generation that they have been admitted to full citizenship here in free England—when you still hear, as I have done, Catholic Monsignori maintain that the Jews do sacrifice Christian children at the Passover, and that the story of Esther Solomossy was true—when they know that we have less devotion to our creed than they have to theirs—that they have a purer physical condition because they lead a purer moral life than we—when they watch us in our daily doings and our national

politics, and see the discrepancies between our preaching and our practice—our efforts to proselytize fall dead, and are as the ravings of the idle wind to those who hold themselves the chosen of God from the beginning, the inheritors of the immutable Truth, and the specially preserved for future testimony.

Once in about half a dozen years or so, the missionaries get hold of some circumcized scamp who has no religion to lose, and who offers himself for Christian baptism as a means of living like any other. He knows those old ladies with their fluffy brains and comfortable incomes, who are the mainstays of the converting societies; and he does not see why he may not profit by the gold and line his own nest with the fluff. So he does; and well. The same man comes up for different occasions —like one of those veteran stags turned out time after time for a day's run on Buckhurst Hill. It is all grist to his

worm-eaten mill; and Father Abraham has a broad bosom; and saints at the best are few! But if such converts are considered worth the making, it is evident that no better are to be had.

Nothing of all that I have said of those Jews who believe in their faith as firmly as ever did Solomon or Isaiah—and perhaps more firmly than did either Joshua or Samuel—applies to that loose-lying fringe of indifferentism which is neither Israelite nor Christian, composed as it is of men and women who despise their own race and do not believe the Christian creed. These people have nothing of their national characteristics save in feature and the soft speech which ever bewrayeth them. The women flirt, the men are dissipated, the children are out of hand. Scandal mildews their name and ridicule takes all the starch out of their pretensions. They found their claim to distinction solely on their riches, and think they have scored a point when,

with forced strawberries at half-a-guinea the basket, they refuse their helping in a house of modest expenditure, on the plea of being really surfeited and sated with strawberries—they have had them every day, to please the children, for weeks past! For people of this kind, Jew or Christian, no one can have respect; but for the other two sorts—the strictly religious and tenaciously national, and the sociably catholic and simply well-bred, whose wealth is never made aggressive and who are generous but not ostentatious—all who know them must feel the most profound respect and affection.

This was, and is, the state of my mind concerning the moral and social condition of the Jew; but my intercourse with them had graver mental results than this tabulation according to condition; and it was the nearer contemplation of their faith which finally modified and reconstructed my own. I will do my best to give these results in the order in which they came—making a rough

kind of chart of my thoughts, which may or may not have value for others. To myself, of course, it is important.

The unitarianism which a later intellectual development has read into the Old Testament is grand and majestic. But the supremacy of Jehovah over a crowd of other deities, which was the original theology of the Chosen People, was only a form of polytheism like any other. It was loyalty to the national God—theological patriotism, commendable because patriotic; but it was not the monotheism of the present day, nor was it the spiritualized and impersonal religion it is now. The Being who walks in the Garden in the cool of the day—who repents and grieves, and 'goes down' to scatter the builders of the Tower — who appears unto Abram in the flesh, and shows Himself standing at the top of a ladder to Jacob in a dream—who comes down upon Mount Sinai—speaks unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend—

—who covers him with His hand while His glory passeth by, and shows only His back parts, for no man can see His face and live —this Being is not the God Almighty of the present religious idea. And this development of idea gives the Jewish religion, which looks so stable, and as from the beginning even to now, the same tentative and experimental character as belongs to all things, all thoughts, all systems.

Again, what is the base-line of this faith?—Partiality and consequent injustice; Egotism and consequent vanity. The more I reflected on this base-line, the more I was repelled by its egotism. How intensely selfish is that Litany of Thanksgiving, which else sounds so grand in its confession of trust—so noble in its gratitude! Analyze it from the human standpoint and come to its real meaning. God is thanked all the way through in that He has made them, the Jews, better and more blessed than the other sons of man:—Jews and not Gentiles

—freemen and not slaves—men and not women — with acknowledgment of other special mercies bestowed on them, His Beloved Elder Sons. But those other sons, those younger disinherited, condemned by reason of their unconsenting disinheritance—their arbitrary exclusion from Israel —what of them? What justice to them is there in this favouritism shown to these others? Why should the Jews thank God that He has made them freemen and not slaves, so long as slavery exists for their fellowmen? If freedom be His gift and slavery His scourge, why should those innocent black babies born yesterday on the Gaboon be destined to undergo a curse they have done nothing to deserve? And yet, is not this belief in special care and blessing the core of every religion extant? The Jews exclude from equal heavenly rights the Gentiles; the Mohammedans the Giaours; the Roman Catholics all Christian dissenters from their Church, together with those

outside the Covenant, in one crowd of the unredeemed because unbaptized; and every petty Protestant sect denies, relative to its own special enlightenment, the pretensions to divine illumination of every other sect. Do not we, of the Church of England, in the plenitude of our self-conferred infallibility, pray for all 'Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics'? And, indeed, are we not all in turn prayed for by one another in this milder age, after we have burned and been burned in a fiercer?

In truth and fairness, however, I must say that my views, which are entirely my own, gathered from reading and fashioned by reflection, were emphatically denied by my Jewish friend spoken of above, who, after all, by his learning and his position, has the best right to pronounce on his own religion. I will give his own words, which came in answer to a letter of mine, setting forth these ideas.

'You speak,' he said, 'of the Gentiles

who are ever outside the Courts of Jehovah. This sentiment is utterly un-Jewish, and is absolutely incompatible with the belief of the best class of Jews. Also, "His sons," as applied to Jewish in antithesis to the Gentiles, is as wrong as the other.

'With your assertion concerning "the Unitarianism which a later intellectual development has read into the Old Testament," I cannot agree. No Jew, *when Hebrew was a living language*, ever supposed that God walked, repented or grieved, or appeared in the flesh, or spoke to Moses as a friend, etc. Language of some kind must be used to intimate that Adam's disobedience was known to God; that sin is not pleasing to Him; that He inspired Moses, etc. But the expressions used in the text are the mere exigencies of an Eastern language, which clothes every act of the most commonplace nature in the most luxuriant imagery. Even in our prosaic English we say, for instance, "the sun

rises," because it appears to rise. Shall the coming New Zealander, when he sits in the recess of London Bridge, perusing the disinterred remains of an almanac, be justified in declaring that the English nation of the time of Queen Victoria were ignorant of the elements of astronomy?

'Your arguments against the "base-lines" of our faith are even more unjust. Analyze the prayers, as you say, and what then? Think of the dreadful idolatry of an incarnate God, and shall not the Jew thank God for the faith that is in him? Think of the life of a slave, and shall not the Jew thank God that "stone walls do not a prison make," and that, happen what may to his body, he is ever intellectually free; think of the pains of maternity, and say, shall not the *Jew* be thankful that he is not a *Jewess?* This last sentiment must convince you that when the Jew thanks God for what he is, he has not the non-Jew in mind by way of antithesis. Moreover, your ex-

pression, "His beloved Elder Sons," or any similar or cognate expression, does not occur in any Jewish Prayer-book. We thank God that we are not idolators, but with no Pharisaic sense of superiority. Nor are there "other disinherited younger sons." These words entirely misinterpret us. The Jewish religion proclaims—and it is the only one that does proclaim—that "the *upright* of all nations have their share in the world to come"—no elder and no younger, no primogeniture, and no disinherited; and above all, no eternal punishment. We do *not* "exclude from equal Heavenly rights the Gentiles." We were chosen, not for the enjoyment of privileges, but for the performance of duties. I am inexpressibly pained and grieved by your words. Moreover, the parable of Dives and Lazarus does not apply to us. We do care, and care very much, about other people's sufferings. For example, we are about to celebrate the Passover, the anni-

versary of our deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The Feast lasts eight days, during which, in Synagogue, every day certain psalms of thanksgiving are recited. But on six days of the Festival only a curtailed form of thanksgiving is used, because our release involved the destruction of thousands of our enemies, and we may not, therefore, rejoice so fully as if no life had been taken; and this custom exists yet, though thirty-three centuries have elapsed. So, on the Feast of Esther, in whose lifetime the Jews were nearly massacred, no thanksgiving psalms are recited, for the reason that the Jewish deliverance involved the taking of life. We are not really open to the reproach your words convey.'

I give this letter in its entirety, though it condemns what I have already said, and in the minds of many will destroy my whole further chain of reasoning. As a man of honour, no other course is open to me; and, more-

over, I have too great a respect for my friend—for his profound scholarship, his sincerity and faithful piety—not to give him this opportunity for refuting me if he has the truth and I am in error.

My friend's arguments did not convince me of more than certain mistakes in fact, which did not touch my main point. No one's arguments do convince me unless based on undeniable proof. By the law under which I live and suffer I have to work out my difficulties for myself; and no personal admiration for the moral results in an individual can carry me over to the faith from which these results have sprung. I am like one standing in a barren centre whence radiate countless pathways—each professing to lead to the Unseen Home. By the very multiplicity I am bewildered, and for fear of taking the wrong way and following after a delusion, I stand still and take none.

The doctrine of a centralized truth, and

therefore of God's special favour to those who hold it, revolts me by its assumption of partiality and consequent injustice.

But the foundation of all religions alike lies in this belief—direct Divine illumination and consequent possession of special spiritual grace—else have they no original standpoint at all. The correlative of this special favouritism and enlightenment is darkness, estrangement, and eternal exile for those who are not included. This state of mind is more emphasized in all other religions than it is in our own laxer and more liberal Protestantism. And the reason why is easy to see. Wronged and ill-treated by man, orphaned among the nations as he is, the Jew clings to his belief in this special favour of God, as his solatium in eternity for his misfortunes in time; just as the long-sustained political supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church, and the tangential divergence of Mohammedanism and the other Eastern religions from Western curves

of thought and knowledge explains the exclusiveness of these last.

Going back to Judaism:—When we, who have been taught from our childhood to hold the Jewish race as still under the sentence of Divine ostracism, are brought face to face with its own inherent belief in Divine favour—favour traversing chastisement—we are startled into strange thoughts of comparison and inquiry. And we ask first: What of others? and then: What of ourselves?

Contrast this self-complacent trust in God's special favour to ourselves, to the exclusion of our less fortunate brothers, with the generous humanity of those who think that their own best happiness is to be found in the happiness of others. Our poor discredited prophets, the Communists, with their altruistic dreams of a universal Utopia, where shall be no lack and no injustice, have at least a nobler working ideal, if so fatally bad a modus

operandi, than any which speculative theology has yet formulated. For them is no exclusiveness of favour—no heights where the beloved stand joyously in the sunshine—no hollows where the disgraced cry out to the empty night in vain—no Heaven for the lambs—no Hell for the goats—no broad lands and goodly heritage for the first-born, with banishment and dispossession for the rest; but a sweet and fruitful elysium for all alike. Poor dreamers, and yet how human! and how far more generous than the covenanted!

The parable of Dives and Lazarus synthesizes the whole matter. 'Leaning on Abraham's bosom—safe in the arms of the Saviour—I and my beloved are happy, no matter who else is in torment. I have made my own calling and election sure; and for the rest, it is not my affair whom God in His infinite mercy and justice may think fit to torture for all eternity. The great gulf fixed between us cannot be

passed, and Dives must call out for water in vain. He had his good things when I had my evil days. The balance is now redressed, and the torment of the one who was formerly the pampered favourite of fortune does not lessen my own beatification.'

Why! little children, for all their greed and inconsiderateness, will beg their parents for restoration to favour of their disgraced playmates, even though good gifts are heaped up for their own share. They cannot enjoy their holiday unless John and Jane are there to enjoy it too; and their sweets have lost their savour if these others are doomed to bread and water. But in the creed of the most pious Christian, the angels and the archangels; the blessed saints who still busy themselves with the welfare of the race of which they were once living members; the Madonna whose function it is to intercede; the Christ who came to save; the Holy Ghost who inspires the human soul to good; and God, as Father and

Creator who can do all He will—together with the saved who once loved the lost—they can all rejoice in their blessedness and exult in their glory, while sinful souls weep in unavailing sorrow because grace has been bestowed on the one side and withheld on the other.

It is of no use for advanced philosophers to say: 'All this is elemental. No thinking man believes now in eternal punishment any more than in a personal devil.'

The great mass of people do not think; and where the men and women who have renounced these superstitions may be counted by units, those to whom they are active influences over life and thought are to be reckoned by millions.

Go a step farther, from generals to particulars, from collective creed to individual prayer. Dismiss as untenable, by reason of its injustice, the theory of inherited blessings because of the faith into which you chance to have been born—

belief in the efficacy and the need, the righteousness of, and the response to, prayer remains. But when I thought of the Jews and their Litany of Thanksgiving—of our own Te Deums for victories gained perhaps in unjust and cruel wars—of all other assumptions of special favour—when I thought of all this as the circumference, and then came back to my own supplications as the centre, I felt a certain shock and conviction of selfishness that was as painful as physical anguish.

If what we call grace is an extraneous gift, bestowed or withheld at pleasure, the bestowal is an act of partiality, the withholding one of injustice. Why should a father need to be entreated before granting that without which his children are less well equipped, morally and spiritually, for the great Armageddon ever going on? That prayer should of itself, by reflex action and by the logical consequences of endeavour, strengthen resolve

and calm distress—that is intelligible enough. But that it should be necessary before obtaining a father's favour—of that I began to be sceptical. Benevolence gives unsolicited those things which are needed by the unendowed. A parent feeds his children, who yet do not beg him for their daily bread; a man of average humanity provides for the life and well-being of his dog without being fawned upon. But according to our creed, God alone demands abasement before He will save—entreaty before He will endow. Can this be true of All Mercy, All Goodness, All Justice? Is it not rather a survival of the old craven times, when the one strong man was the lord and king before whom the people had no rights save such as he granted for favour?—when royal clemency allowed and plebeian humility besought?—when there was no justice, no law, and only his arbitrary will? We see the same thing still in savage countries like Da-

homey, where a man may be gradually slain by successive mutilations—mutilations which make him a mere ghastly simulacrum of a man, no more human than a New Zealander's idol—yet where to the last this wretched abject being crawls humbly after his kingly destroyer, kissing the ground and eulogizing his mercy, his goodness and his power.

Again, God does not give His grace even to all who pray. In the continuance of ignorance that might be enlightened, and consequent continuance of the tyranny and cruelty which spring from that ignorance—in the sorrow of pain needlessly inflicted—in the degradation of passions which override resolve—in the fruitless torment of desires which, like scorpions, sting themselves within the circle of fire that surrounds them—in the anguish of untimely death and the bitterness of preventible loss, we see the futility of prayer, whether for spiritual grace or material blessing.

And what a volume of supplication goes up day by day and hour by hour from man to that dread Deity behind the clouds, who Can and Does Not! Surely, were there an Intelligent God cognizant of our affairs, a Personal Providence to be entreated and moved, He must before now have answered so that all men should hear Him! He must before now have made the crooked things straight and the rough places smooth! We pray—we pray—with tears and faith, with ardour and despair, with longing and humbleness of soul;—and who answers? Who? When our dearest lie dead and our passions are still our masters —when the Hand is not stretched forth to save nor the grace bestowed to help— where hides the God who has promised to give to those who ask? And even if I, in my own person, think that I am answered, what about my brother still in spiritual bondage, unenlightened and unredeemed? There ought to be no peace for me while

one human soul is left without divine guidance. Yet I am but a man; and God is the Father of all!

All these thoughts haunted and overpowered me. The sins and sorrows of humanity seemed to grow larger as I contrasted them with the Power which could redeem and would not. Those sins, those sorrows, claimed the Divine as their author by reason of their very existence. 'I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things.' And the mystery of spiritual darkness seeking light and not finding it, grew till it swallowed up all the rest. I cried aloud for illumination. I prayed with the anguish which no man need blush to feel nor be ashamed to confess, for the Divine Light which should make these dark things clear. No answer came. No voice spoke to my soul, penetrating the thick cloud and showing the living way of truth. None! none! But one night as I prayed, I prayed

into the visible dark, the felt void ; and my words came back like a hot blast into my face as I realized that I petitioned an immutable and impersonal Law which neither heard nor heeded—which wrought no conscious evil and gave no designed favour.

CHAPTER V.

WHO that has known the hour when the Father is not, and Law has taken the place of Love, can ever forget it? The whole aspect of life is changed, and a cry goes out from the soul as when the beloved has died—a cry to which is no answer and for which is no comfort—only the echo flung back by the walls of the grave. The blank despair; the sense of absolute loneliness, of drifting on a pathless sea without a fixed point to make for or a sign by which to steer, of floating unrooted in space; the consciousness of universal delusion and phantasmagoric self-creation that it has all

been—no man who has gone through that moment of supreme anguish need fear the schoolman's hell. He has been down into one worse than the worst which terrified timid souls in those Ages of Faith which were essentially the Days of Darkness. Henceforth he has only reason for his guide, with that impenetrable barrier of the Unknown—and Unknowable ?—closing the way at every turn ;—that dissolving power of negation, reducing what had once been solid and eternal to a vapoury mass of conjecture where nothing is sure, save ignorance.

And yet if this darkness, this limitation, this impenetrable barrier, be really the TRUTH, and all attempts at more positive construction be delusions, the pain of the discovery, in the desolation it brings with it, is better for the strong man than the false comfort of a cheating hope. Before all else let us have things as they are. If we are in the midst of an untilled waste,

let us recognise its barrenness and its potentialities; and neither believe that it is a garden for this part, nor unimprovable for that. In the one case we have at least an incentive to cultivate and amend our holding, and to go on until we come to something better. In the other, we are content with our fancied possessions, like those poor creatures who command the stars in Bedlam; or we fold our hands and leave the activities of amelioration to a higher power and one outside ourselves.

Nothing tends so much to religious speculation as unhappiness. The believing strengthen the foundations of their faith; the doubting plunge deeper into inquiry. For where there is no outside joy to satisfy the nature, the mind turns inward on itself, thoughts taking the place of affections, and speculations that of emotions. In these lonely days of my life I went over again the whole ground that I had traversed —from my first doubts of the evidence of

the Incarnation to where I now stood—confessing only the truths of science, and confronted everywhere else by uncertainty, phantasmagoria, and the Unknown. I recalled it all, step by step, and how from the first doubt I gradually grew to see that the teaching of Christ and His Apostles was only abreast with the knowledge of the day; and that those things which have made most for the good of humanity were hidden from them as from the later saints and martyrs. I specially remembered the strange tenacity with which my mind had fastened on that trivial matter of failing to eradicate ophthalmia; and how this had crystallized and drawn to its own form all the rest.

The impossibility of logically faithful adherence to the laws of life as laid down in the Gospels had also been a stumbling-block. Those laws of life are pure communism in system, with the widest, flattest, most loving democracy in action.

But put them into practice—call your maid-servant 'my dear,' and shake hands with your footman; forgive an impertinence repeated as often as forgiven; allow yourself to be defrauded twice over by your needy brother who takes your cloak as well as your coat; take no thought for the morrow, but spend your principal on those who want—act out your life on the Christian plan in its integrity, and then see where you will stand, not only in relation to your own fortunes, but in relation to the respect of your fellow Christians.

I could never accept the doctrine of Development, which makes it necessary for man to continually explain and expand the elements of Christianity, so as to harmonize them with the contradictions of science and the necessities of society. This doctrine, which is cousin-german to the uninterrupted stream of inspiration claimed by the Romish Church, is so evidently an ingenious compromise by those who wish to excuse and

dare not deny, that the wonder is how any robust thinker can be found to adopt it. It is a clever patch to hide a rent; but the patch was not in the original web.

Again, the sweet and patient moralities of Christianity are not special to Christians, but all, including that sublime command to do unto others as we would they should do unto us, and to love our enemies —which have been held as peculiarly the Master's—are to be found in every other moral code promulgated by every other religious teacher. Buddha, Confucius, the 'Rabbi Talmud,' all taught the same thing. And necessarily;—for the abnegation of private vengeance is the beginning of social law. Just as Judaism was the outcome of Egyptian theology, plus racial sympathy and the supremacy of Jehovah, so was Christianity the outcome of Judaism, plus a more generalized philanthropy than belonged to the close-set lines of an exclusive people. But Christians imagine that

brotherly love began with Christ, as the Jews imagine that the law of righteousness was first made known to Moses. And the evidence of the papyri here, and of the Talmud there, goes for nothing. These beliefs are on all-fours with that naïve confession of reverent ignorance made by the poor Catholic peasant to whom I talked the other day, when he told me that before Christ came into the world all was darkness and chaos, and that creation and the human race began with the Madonna and her Son.

The story of Buddha, too, had greatly exercised me because of its parallelism in self-devotion with the life of Christ. Buddha, who claims no incarnate Godhead and preaches no impersonate God, did as much for righteousness and humanity as did the Son of Mary. A king, a husband, wealthy, powerful, he abandoned all human delights to become a beggar and an outcast, that he might find the Hidden Wisdom and

thus rescue mankind from ignorance and the sin that lies therein. And—scheme for scheme—purification by successive incarnations is more merciful than even purgatory, not to speak of hell; and reabsorption in the Great Whole is no more unthinkable than the eternal individuality of a material product.

We abandon the belief in the unchangeableness of law—which is masculine—in favour of the religious sentiment, shifting, personal, emotional, subject to the pressure of affection and the relief of compassion—which is feminine. The fundamental doctrines of Christianity;—seeking strength elsewhere than in our own resolve; humility before a dread power which accords favour and denies rights; holiness of life springing from love to or fear of God and in obedience to His command, and not because holiness is good in itself and needs no incentive of reward nor deterrent of punishment; the fear born of hell and the hope

registered in heaven; Christ, the eternal Man-God, ever willing to save those who come to Him; Mary, the eternal Mother, ever ready to comfort and intercede for those who pray to her; the saintly hierarchy doing their best for their loving brothers and sisters—all these heavenly advocates standing as merciful mediators between humanity and the Supreme God; the intense conviction of the personal importance of the individual;—these are essentially feminine; and the proof of sympathy is seen in the lines of attachment. It is woman who fills the churches; as how should it not be, seeing that Christianity idealizes her needs, her virtues, her sentiments? The virile strength of man has no favour where her timid plasticity has all. Where heathen ethics taught magnanimity, because of the noble pride which would not stoop to parallel lines of baseness, Christianity teaches forgiveness, because Christ forgave His enemies and died that

sinners might be forgiven of God. Does not the whole world lie between these two limits? Surely!—the whole world of masculine self-control and feminine obedience; masculine reason and feminine emotion. Where heathen philosophy taught self-respect, and Buddhism makes a man's higher moral state dependent on his own will, Christianity sighs out the confession of sin, and trusts to a stronger Hand for help. Where heathendom formulated the great law of Necessity, encompassing and limiting the action of the gods themselves, Christianity confesses an Omnipotence which overloads us with misery here that we may be compensated hereafter, and patiently accepts present sorrow for the sake of future glory, as a woman accepts the mysterious pain of maternity for the sake of the living joy to come. Where heathendom, manlike, credited its gods with the lusty life of love, the pleasures of social intercourse and the varied delights of the senses, Christianity,

as the chaster woman, ranks perpetual virginity as one of the supremest virtues, and makes all sensual enjoyment coincident with spiritual degradation. Where heathendom left Hades a land of shadows, and made the sorrow of life after death to consist in the bloodless strengthlessness of the spirits of brave men, neither alive nor yet dead, Christianity accepts, trembling, the ghastly doctrine of eternal torture, to be avoided only through the mercy of the Saviour who gives by grace what cannot be wrung from power—just as the typical woman sues for mercy because she has not the courage to demand, nor the strength to obtain, justice. It is the same through all the clauses. And if not in direct injunction nor in distinct allowance, yet in spirit and sympathy, the apotheosis of woman began with Christianity, because therein are enshrined the special characteristics of her sex.

Here let me ask without irreverence,

and going back on the anthropomorphism of the Christian faith: Is not the existence to which the creed condemns our God, or Gods, inexplicable in its unnecessary and enduring pain? We pray to them for pity and mercy. But does not pity include the sorrow which comes from sympathy? and how can there be mercy without the correlative of undue harshness? All the cries and piteous prayers which go up from earth to heaven, and surround the throne of Grace like clouds risen from oceans of tears, if they move the Divine Beings to whom they are addressed, move them of necessity through this pain of pity. And realize for a moment this weeping, shrieking, agonizing crowd; these countless millions of tortured men and women; these sobbing innocents massacred by fate and nature;—and the Great Powers looking on, sometimes helping those who cry to them for aid, and sometimes not. Add to this our fratricidal belief that those who cry for aid to these

Divine Beings under certain names are not heard at all. Christ may help us, but Vishnu cannot help his worshipper. God is our Father, but Brahma, Allah, Joss, are as powerless to save as was ever Ashtaroth or Zeus. It is as if children weeping in a dark room where is some one they cannot see, were left to their misery unhelped, because they beseech the nurse when it is the mother who is there; and the mother will not answer unless called by her right name. The whole thing is human. Ever and ever we determine the ways of Heaven by our own acts. We influence the divine will and deflect the law for our need and by our prayers. Or we create—as in the saints—the aristocracy of departed souls to whom we ascribe special powers, accrediting them as ambassadors whom the Great God accepts as they are sent. Or we give names and forms to angel and archangel, and call one Gabriel

and another Michael, with others less popular, such as Zachariel, Anael, Oriphiel and Lamael!

Unitarianism, with its eclecticism, rejecting the miracles, the atonement, a personal devil and eternal damnation, but always retaining that loving reverence for the character of Christ which is due to the most precious possession and perfect outcome of the human race, is naturally the next stage for those who have learned to deny the literal truth of the Mosaic record and the interpretation of the Gospels by the Church. Belief in the efficacy of prayer, in the disciplinary meaning of life, in an overruling Providence and an individual immortality, gives both anchorage and the sense of enlightenment. But here again, though the anthropomorphism of the orthodox creed is softened, and the personality of the Deity is more faintly sketched than in Byzantine mosaic or mediæval fresco, it is always a personality—always

humanity — grand, sublime, ideal, even nebulous, if you will, but none the less humanity in excelsis. As how should it not be, seeing that we cannot go beyond our own experience ? Yet are we sure that Unitarianism gives us the truth ? Beyond, and overruling organic forces, are we absolutely sure there is a Power corresponding to our own human nature—pitiful and wrathful; stern and placable; spreading temptations as a net before the feet of the unwary and punishing those who get entangled therein; able to save and consigning to perdition ?—a Power of fluid resolves and unstable will; of unjust preferences and inexplicable abandonment; working a miracle of healing for A, but letting B drag on slowly to the grave by the way of unmitigated torture?—a Power which gives grace to one so that he shall ask for more, and denies to another that initial impulse of godliness so that he does not even desire to have or seed or increase?—a Power which

saves one soul alive and gives to another the wages of sin—death ?

If there were in fact any stream of inspiration from the Great Unseen to man, should we be left to our present blindness, searching painfully the better way ? Slowly, toilsomely, urged forward by pain, encompassed by difficulties, bit by bit we reform our laws through the gradual pressure, the gradual enlightenment, brought about by the intolerable injustice of the past; one by one we unearth those discoveries which make for the general good. Are we divinely directed in all this ? Have all our lawgivers, inventors, discoverers, been simply the media of the higher intelligence ? Where then begins and where ends this providential inspiration ? Was Volta divinely inspired ? If so, then also Wheatstone and Morse, Siemens and Edison, and every other adapter of a newly mastered principle —whether it be electricity, the motive force of steam, printing from moveable types,

paper made from rags, or any other discovery by which society has been modified and human thought revolutionized.

Unless we accept the creed that man's mental being is governed by the same law of development as that which has produced brain from protoplasm — that the moral sense is as much a matter of evolution as is the intellectual—we are lost in a sea of contradictions. Grant the unseen ultimate to which we are tending, and the hidden origin as well as meaning of life; grant the whole area of the unknown, and confess the mystery surrounding thought and matter alike; still, by this creed of mental evolution, we have at least a free sea-board though we may never touch land. But give us Omnipotence which interferes and does not save—which inspires some and does not cherish all—and we come inevitably to Mill's alternative :—Either not Omnipotent or not Benevolent.

The presence of God recedes as science advances. In the ignorant days of fetishism He is incorporate in the trees and the stones, the mountains and the streams, the sun and moon and stars and sky. He then becomes less the individual form, than the active forces, of nature. He is no longer to be touched in His material embodiment, but His power is in the tempest and His voice is in the thunder; He passes by in the strong wind; and when storms devastate the land, it is God who sends them for our chastisement. He gives us gentle rain for our benefit; and again He loosens against us drought and blight and pestilence for our sins. When, by the discovery of physical laws, we come to the knowledge that the forces of nature and all forms of disease are governed by conditions as absolute as those of arithmetic, then we relegate God's dealings with man to the mind, the spiritual sense, to communion through prayer, and inspiration as the con-

sequence. He is the Great Soul; and our soul recognises His.

But when and where does this soul begin in man? when is that something added which is exterior to intelligence? We are one with the rest of living things, just as the earth is one with the sun and the planets. Our moral sentiments and intellectual perceptions have their beginnings in birds and beasts and insects—differing in degree and grade, not in kind. And thought—which we identify with our spirit, our soul—is no more strange nor incomprehensible than life. Both are incomprehensible. But that function of the brain which we call thought—life conscious of itself—is as, and no more mysterious than, the selection of its elements of growth by a crystal, the transformation of chemical material into the wood and leaves of a tree, the pushing over a barren space of the underground rootlets seeking their proper pabulum beyond. 'Mind-stuff' is behind

and within all matter; but is this mind-stuff providential? is creation self-conscious when as a plant it turns to the light, as a broken crystal takes up material to mend its fractures, as a microscopic speck of protoplastic jelly pushes out a finger-like process to seize some other speck which shall help to its own sustainment? Or is our great distinction in the moral sense? But dogs have a conscience, and elephants a sense of duty and responsibility.

Who does not see that all things are subjective?—all moods and thoughts conditional? Morality is as much a matter of climate, age, sex, education, as is the growth of an oak from an acorn in England, of a palm from a date-stone in Syria. It is as shifting as the thermometer — as local as vegetation. The morality of one age is not that of another. The morality of races is as diverse as the colour of their skins. The drunkenness which carries so little comparative disgrace

with it in England would be a man's destruction in Turkey; the free use of the knife, which public opinion justifies in Italy, would be the breaking of the Sixth Seal in Norway. We have not come to the absolute even in fundamentals; and Truth and Justice, incarnate in a Prime Minister, would make of the empire a wreck and of himself a traitor; while the polygamy which is honourable in a Mohammedan is felony in England, and the public prostitution rampant in our streets would be the translation of Gehenna to the upper world in Tangier or Ispahan.

Personally, what we are is determined by two things—age and sex; and we can no more go beyond their influence than the earth can free itself from the law of gravitation. The boy's thoughts and virtues are not the young man's; nor are the young man's those of his father in middle age; nor his again those of the octogenarian who has outlived both the active energy of his passions

and the plastic power of his brain. Among them which is absolute? What determines the very ground-work of society, and its moralities, but this material fact of sex, with its secondary modification, age? The courage of the man, the self-devotion of the woman; the shame of cowardice and lying—a form of cowardice—with him whose strength includes the salvation of others as well as of himself, and the easy condonation accorded to both with her whose weakness excuses fear; his freer license, her chaster modesties; his sense of justice, which makes laws for the equal good of all, her narrowed sympathies born of the restricted cares of maternity; his reason, her instinct; his philosophy, her religion; his aggressiveness, her compassion—these, and all other antitheses which could so easily be made, are essentially matters of sex doubled with age. And these are the bases of society and morality. How then can things so entirely conditional be treated as absolute?

Again, each man and woman in a community of worshippers has his or her private spiritual experiences. Conviction passes for inspiration, and a state of mind proves itself. We find this in all religions alike; whether it be the Christian, the Mohammedan, or the Buddhist—in a Catholic Trappist or a Free-Grace Baptist. So that, reason as we may, we ever come back to the central point—the subjective quality of all thought, all belief, all morality, and how what we are is determined by the material conditions of inheritance, sex, age, and individual constitution;—which yet does not explain the religious instinct, nor catalogue the force by which it works so powerfully in the world.

Where is that Place of Departed Souls, so passionately believed in, so fervently desired? Always not here—not on nor about this planet on which we live, where the 'strengthless heads' of the dead lie mouldering in their forgotten graves. Yet we are made of the same stuff and

governed by the same laws as all the rest —the difference between us and Jupiter, us and the moon, us and the sun, being in the stages of development reached and passed. The laws of life and motion, of displacement and reconstruction, must be the same everywhere, though the special manifestations may vary. Everywhere there must be matter becoming, or already become, intelligence conscious of itself—or, by the changed relations of material forces, life in its plastic energy extinct and done with. Everywhere the form is finite and the essence eternal—the sum undiminished, but the place and relation of the units shifting. How can our dream of an unchanging eternity—a state of stable equilibrium never displaced—be possible ? How can that individuality, which began and is bound up with material conditions, exist free from those conditions ? How can a spirit be always the same, without change of parts or interchange of force ? Every emotion includes

a change and shifting of atoms; everything we see and feel and hear and touch, and everything we think, sets the molecules of our body in motion—creates waste, reinforcement, an alteration of conditions and a reconstruction of parts. To speak of the soul as something beyond the laws which govern the universe is to assume what reason refuses to accept. A soul must at least be a force, like the flashing of the lightning, or like gravitation or attraction. To say that it is independent of all cosmic conditions is a phrase which simply marks our ignorance of things which are too subtle for our senses:—as the light of the night which the night-birds can see and we cannot—the sounds of the growing grass, the ebb and flow of the sap in the forest trees, the creeping step of the tendrils, the gathering up of material for the building of the germ, the cry of the bursting bud—all of which are there, though we cannot hear them. The organic forces are immaterial, according to

the nomenclature imposed by our own limitations. But the organic forces include movement; and movement is displacement. Is the soul more subtle than electricity?—is the heaven of our eternity more stagnant than a sea of brass?

We look to a future life as an advance on this in the perfecting of our intelligence, the continuance of our affections, the redressing of our wrongs. Should we have ever formulated this eternal life, had not death snatched us away in the immaturity or the plenitude of our powers, before our lives had been lived out to the end, or our work completed? Had we all lived out to our ultimate, we should have had only the need of rest, not the desire of renovation. Our work would have continued after us—our real immortality; and we should have been re-incarnate in our children—our replaced selves. And when we had sunk to sleep, after the prefatory slumber of decay, we should have no more asked for a resurrec-

tion of the body, nor for a continuance of spiritual identity, than for the individual return of this shattered rose and that fallen leaf.

Even those who loved us best would have said: When? At what period? Our playfellows, from whom we had been parted all our lives, would have said: As the boy they knew. Our partners in life's work would have said: As the strong and energetic man—strong and energetic because of the conditions of his age and sex. Our children and grandchildren: As the calm and tolerant, just and passionless, sage—calm, just and passionless also as the result of his age and the condition of his sex—that is, as a spirit influenced in its immortal nature by the material circumstances of flesh and food and time. Do you say: As the undated summary of these three states—the individual as he was in the tender freshness of his adolescence, in the energy of his maturity, in the wise tranquillity of his physical

decay? You might as well say: 'Give me the bud, the flower, and the fruit all at the same moment, enclosed in the same calyx.'

Even while we live, when time has passed and sorrow is forgotten, is it necessary to our own happiness, or integral to the well-being of cosmic things, that our mother, aged ninety, should be finally convinced we did not steal those cakes for which we were unjustly punished just sixty-five years ago? What does it matter now to our seventy years of peace and patience, wherein time and thought have taught us the relative value of things and the worthlessness of going back on the past? It is done with—dead and gone, buried and forgotten. Let it lie in its deserved oblivion. It was hard to bear at the time; but now it is as insignificant as the fact that three hundred years ago the storm came down and wrecked that poor widow's cottage by the mountain-stream, and brought her and hers to poverty for many a day and year. The ruin was

great in its time, and the poor widow believed in compensation beyond the grave. Does she want it now? That too is past and done with, and wiped out of the record of time and memory; as are the sorrows of all those who have been destroyed—with those others consequently left desolate—by this volcanic eruption and that destructive earthquake. When, thousands of years ago, a savage wife was subject to the jealous test of the ordeal, and, innocent as she was, died under the ordeal—when want of food made the men kill the women and children to keep themselves alive—when Spartan helots and Roman slaves were scourged for faults they did not commit, and Gurths and Wambas were torn from their kindred swine in the beech-woods and set up as targets for the foeman's archers in quarrels not their own—when all this was done generations and generations ago, and the very memory of the men and deeds is lost, must these poor victims be

recompensed now? It was a sorrow while life lasted; and love had the ache of memory to the end of things. But now it is over—like yesterday's fever; and the world—the Great Man—has gone on as if those things had never been. Or rather, these and cognate things have been the ground-work of that amelioration which has come for the successors. They have been accumulated accusations against imperfect conditions, till at last the voices grew so loud that those in power were forced to listen and understand. From their dead selves men have indeed risen to higher things in the concrete; — which is a nobler outlook than that happy hunting-ground for the individual, as compensation for the goring of buffaloes on the prairie.

While pain is sharp and passion strong, we demand justice, redress, compensation, revenge. In a few years we shall have passed out of the sphere of our wrongs; before then we shall have come to the peace

of patience. What matters it now? We see how small have been our own individual sufferings, compared with the larger sorrows of the race, the unconscious cruelty of nature, the blind tyranny of ignorance. And we would take shame to ourselves to demand redress or retaliation for that which came and went so long ago, and is so small a fraction in the sum! For we have ever left us—Man. Ever that mighty law of moral evolution unfolds to us greater truths; ever the development of society leads us higher and higher. Just as the physical man has touched the beauty of the Apollo from the narrow skull and prognathous jaw of the brutish primitive—just as Shakespeare has been evolved from that languageless being, half beast, half human, who walked with bent knees not fully erect, for all covering had but his own hairy hide, and for all tools his own huge canines—so has the social man touched the sublimity of Law from the unordered chaos of indi-

vidual strength. We make better enactments; we spread knowledge; we apply remedies; we improve conditions—all for others, not ourselves. We realize with ever clearer understanding the obligation of living for the future, not only for the present; for the general well-being, not only for our individual good. After the practice of the right of might comes the doctrine of the duties of power; after class privileges come equal rights.

Altruism, far from general acceptance as it is, is at once our highest duty and our noblest consolation. To the individual, life is too often like a huge cynical joke where he is led by false hopes, mocked by illusive pleasures, pursued by phantom fears, and where he loses the joy of his desire so soon as he gains possession. The length of the time passed in the preparation of immaturity, the shortness of that of fruition, and then again the comparatively long decay—with the brevity of the whole term,

and the fact that each individual, born helpless and idiotic, has to learn all for himself from the beginning, and that he must die, leaving behind him only results attainable by endeavour but not absolute possessions bequeathed to the race like a sixth sense or the power of flying—the sharpness of sorrow and the satiety of love —joy that is pain because of its intensity— pain that makes living intolerable for its anguish—ignorance which brings disaster, yet is of itself part of the inalienable condition of things — all this illusion, this phantasmagoria, this darkness, where the only reality is suffering and the only certainty death, makes life, as I have said, like a farce over-written by a tragedy. And from this suffering, this mockery, this delusion of the senses and painful striving of thought and aspiration, the only mode of escape is forgetfulness of self in the good of the race.

A few tender souls are piously grateful be-

cause the grass is green and the flowers are sweet; because the birds sing in the trees, the butterflies are beautiful to the eye, and the exquisite glory of created things delights those who watch it. That is, because their senses are gratified; and the imagination, a function of the emotions, follows the senses. But they forget the strife and death which overarch the whole; and how the general perfection which enchants them has come about only by the sacrifice of the weaker individuality. They forget the ruthlessness of nature, and how that hedgerow and this close-grown turf are but smaller representations of the shambles and the battlefield—Aceldamas wet with hidden blood. When reminded of this wholesale sacrifice for the sake of the selected margin—of the unconscious cruelty of that assemblage of forces we call Nature—they fall back on the pious formula of 'All is for the best,' and how 'the mystery of pain is one of those things which are hidden with Christ in God.'

These tender souls are to virile thinkers what children are to men; and their optimism, in view of what lies round them and the goal for which all sentient life is bound, is no more serious philosophy than the schoolman's calculation of how many angels could dance on the point of a needle is serious kinematics.

And yet, with this perpetual recession of the Presence of God, this withdrawal of the Hand of Providence in favour of an arbitrary Law that is never broken up for miracles nor set aside for interposition, there is Something behind matter, whether we call it Mind-stuff, Intelligence, Life, the First Cause, or God. What that Something is we know not. What are our relations with it and the universe outside ourselves and our planet—these also we know not. And the ultimate meaning of our aspirations—the root and fruit of that religious sense which is all but universal, and our belief in individual immortality, also universal—

this ultimate meaning is as dark as the rest.

Why should we be virtuous, men say, when we get nothing by it? 'Eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,' rather than the pale vigils of thought, the painful discipline of self-control, that starvation of the senses we call the higher life, that moral mutilation we call virtue. Why should we forego the present, which is our own, for a future by which we shall not profit nor where we shall be found? Ah, why, indeed! Because of the law of moral evolution, which is just as irresistible as that of the physical—which is indeed the result of the physical. We do not know why this law should obtain, any more than we know how, from the savage chipping his flint, we have come to Nasmyth's hammer and the spectroscope:—we only know that it does obtain. Just as from the lowest forms of life, amorphous, undifferentiated, unconstructive, has been evolved man, so,

from the brutality of primitive communities where the stronger kill the weaker, and the mother eats the head of her own child taken for food because one too many in the tribe, have been evolved the majesty of law, the benevolence of pity, the mutual help of co-operation, the restraints of conscience. So will go on being evolved still nobler theories and more perfect states. It is the Law of Progress—the law under which all creation lives until it changes into that dispersion of forces we call death and disintegration, to be followed by a nobler reconstruction. We have no explanation to give. Agnosticism has no pillar of cloud by day nor flame of fire to lead by night, marking the way and illumining each step as we go. It has only the guidance of experience and scientific truth as its way-lines. But the Wherefore and the Whither are as obscure as the Whence and the How —as the future destinies of the race or the undetected relations of the spheres.

I see no more difficulty in educating men up to the highest possible moral point, without the incentive of religious hope or dread, than there has been in educating them to be honourable, chivalrous, refined gentlemen, independent of the religious idea. A man does not forbear to peep through the keyhole, read an open letter, pocket a forgotten sum of money, or do any other purely dishonourable action, for fear of God or the devil, but because of that self-respect which is the root-work of all honourable thought. This sentiment carried farther comes to Altruism; and altruism is the basis of all the higher morality, and is cultivable without reference to personal gain. We must all confess that religion, minus moral and intellectual education, does but little for the world. The Neapolitan lazzarone is intensely religious;—that is, believing in the personal and ever-present as well as omnipotent power of unseen deities. This does not make him other

than a thief or a murderer when occasion offers itself. It is the fear of the law and the certainty of the material policeman which debar men from crime. The hidden deities are to be propitiated; and the sword which is not seen may never strike.

Personally, the religious sentiment embodied in a creed and an actual God has immense private influence. It gives a man a force beyond himself, and helps him to bear misfortune because it leaves him always hope. Still, even here, we find that resignation and self-control are matters of temperament rather than of intellectual assent; for some who believe devoutly never reconcile themselves to their sorrow — never 'forgive God,' according to the saying of Talleyrand—and the willingness of the spirit never overcomes the weakness of the flesh.

On the other hand, we see both patience and self-control carried to the last point of perfection with some philosophers who

have had recourse to no strength but their own.

I have taken all this from what I may call the itinerary of my thoughts. If the summary has the look of inconsequence to more trained dialecticians than I, to myself at least the attachments are distinct. It all seems to hang together—to pass step by step from the rejection of revelation to the confession of Agnosticism; from belief in Providence to the recognition of Law; from the crystallized definite to the nebulous unknown; from the happiness of the individual through eternity to the well-being of the whole human race in time; from Egotism to Altruism; and from personal rights to generalized duties.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER a few years' stay in America, where she lost some of her children, and others had married or made themselves an independent status, my wife came back to England. She was as sincerely persuaded that she was divinely inspired to return as that she had been divinely inspired to go. The field was wider there, she said, but the land was more stubborn here. Hence the need of workers was greater here than there, since moral cultivation has a tendency to spread itself when once begun; and it is better to make barren soil fit to receive the good seed than

to devote one's energies to easy tilling and kindly harvests. Comparative weakness could do this; but it wants exceptional energies—or rather, in her vocabulary, exceptional gifts of inspiration and direction —to do the other. Anyhow, she made her duty quite clear to herself, dear soul! She would have made it just as clear had it been the contrary reading.

I confess I was glad to see her again, and I was much moved when we met. The agitation was only on my own side, She had attained a quasi-Buddhistic state of suppressed individuality wherein no personal circumstances stirred her. She lived only for her work — to spread the knowledge of the truth as she held it, and to bring feminine souls into the liberty she had found for herself. Her crusade was against luxury, fashion, dress, pleasure; her exhortation was for plain living and high thinking—agitation for the direct political action of women—and self-conse-

cration of the choicer sort to celibacy and propagandism. Where she had been advanced before, she was extreme now, and sometimes out of sight altogether.

Since her residence in America she had grown stouter. Her thinned hair was grey; the low-toned creamy complexion of times past had become reddened and roughened. She was neither fresh nor well-busked; she was noticeably in want of strings and stays; and her dress gave one the impression of long service, hard usage, and crying need of repair and renovation. But she had lost none of that seraphic sweetness which had always made her beautiful, and which now shone out through all this personal deterioration as the soft glory of an opal comes up through the scratched surface. And she was the same kind of virginal matron she had ever been.

All my old affection for her, all my old respect for her sincerity, came back in a

flood on my heart. The bitterness of the past was swept away; only its tenderness in the ideal remained. I forgot her high religious contempt for my lower moral nature, her doubt and disbelief, her reproach and opposition; and I saw her only in her own best form—faithful, enduring, real—one worthy of respect, and by her sex to be surrounded with that kind of protection which means honour and includes love. Perhaps on a second trial things would come more right than before. And life was lonely to me; and barren to her of all that made a woman's home.

I did not calculate, and I yielded to the impulse. But when I asked her to come back to me and try me once more as a companion and husband, she looked at me with her placid smile and serene far-away look, and refused me—not harshly, not unkindly, but without the faintest tremor in her level voice, the faintest note of hesitation or wavering.

'Live with you again, dear friend?' she said. 'If I did, I should be worse than Peter when he denied the Lord! Go back to the bondage of your worldliness? —to the religion of clean tablecloths and silk gowns?—to the soul-destroying materialism which makes time of more value than eternity, and punctuality in the hours of food of more importance than planting the good seed and saving souls alive? My poor Chris—never!'

'But, Esther,' I remonstrated; 'surely cleanliness and order and refinement are gains to humanity and helpers to better things!'

'I prefer the simplicity of goodness and the abnegation of all forms of sensuality,' she answered. 'Where so much is to be done, it is a sin to waste time on these minor matters. Souls are perishing for lack of spiritual sustenance, and you are occupied about dainty luxuries for your body; children are starving in the streets

for want of bread, and you criticize the butter of which your cake is made. And you want me to go down into that pit of unrighteousness? Impossible!'

'It is more impossible to go back to elemental conditions,' I said. 'In such a complex state of society as ours, all circumstances claim consideration. And these artificial wants, which you condemn, give the means of subsistence to thousands who else would not know where to turn for work.'

'Christ did not teach this,' she answered simply. 'And I would rather follow Christ than go into the heresies of political economy, or believe the materialism of that arch-heresy of all—that thing you call sociology.'

As I knew of old that argument on these points led to nothing but further dissension, I let the conversation drop, and, instead of taking her to my house, helped her to one of her own.

After some difficulty we found what she wanted—a gardener's cottage of four rooms, about half an hour's journey from London on the South-East line. Here she still lives, with a maid-servant of the not over-ripe age of sixteen, whom she instructs in godliness and woman's rights—God's law and the righteousness of celibacy—contempt for the individual, and respect for the abstract, man—in devotedness to works of charity and indifference to cleanliness, punctuality, the art of cooking, or methodical housekeeping. She takes these girls at fourteen and keeps them till they are twenty, when she has, as she says, made them efficient missionaries and fit to continue the work on their own account.

She comes to see me sometimes when she runs up to London; and she lets me help her with money, as in the old fraternal days when poor Joshua was alive. I go to her on the Sundays when she writes and tells me she is alone and wishes to have

me. This is not often; for she has no time to bestow on a castaway whom she knows she cannot reclaim. At first I used to supplement her scanty larder with external supplies. But she was so sincerely distressed by the influx of unwelcome luxuries, and lamented so pathetically the moral harm I was doing her young servant by thus pampering her sensual appetite, that I have now given up the attempt. So we 'share and share alike,' as she says with her serene smile, when she conscientiously divides into three equal parts a dish which is about enough for one healthy appetite.

After dinner she comes and sits beside me, giving me the armchair, while she takes one without a back and with a broken seat.

'Dear friend, how much nicer this is than that hateful life in Cave Gardens!' she often says, while she pats my hand and sometimes strokes my coat-sleeve benignly.

'How much better you are as a friend outside my life than as a husband belonging to it! And what a mistake we made when we gave up the liberty of friendship for the bondage of marriage!'

'If you are pleased, I am also, my dear,' I answer. 'But I wish I saw you more comfortable.'

'More comfortable, dear friend? I am only too well cared for! Would that all my poor sisters were as well off as I!'

After a little preface of this kind, she generally reads me an address, a sermon, an essay—something which she thinks will be good for my soul and perhaps be the means of letting a little light into the dark places. When I assent to certain passages, or say something which seems to her less hopelessly unrighteous than usual, she looks at me tenderly, her soft eyes softer than ever, and her mild face illumined by that inner light which makes her always beautiful, in spite of the tarnished surface.

'How I wish I might be permitted to convert you, dear friend! How I wish God would grant me the grace to bring you to the light!' she says earnestly. Then she adds, with half a sigh and half a smile: 'In His own good time! He will not let you perish—the object of so many prayers as you are! For we all pray for you, Chris. May our voices be heard and our supplications receive a gracious answer!'

One day she was, for her, strangely sad-hearted. In general, her simple trust in the goodness and directness of Divine ordering carried her over every trial with the quiescence of perfect confidence. But to-day she was overcome. She had just heard of the death of a friend whom she greatly valued—that very M. Boris who had been such a cause of contention between us in times past. For the moment she was overwhelmed, feeling her loneliness with true womanly force, as well as grieving for the loss to the cause of one

who had been as uncompromising a partisan as herself. This young man had been strangely dear to her. She had given him more than ordinary love in its combination of maternal fondness and spiritual comradeship. On the one side, he had been like her eldest and dearest son; on the other, he was her chosen companion, helper and even leader.

She laid her head on my shoulder; and when I put up my hand to her face, I found it wet with silent tears.

For the second time impulse overcame my better judgment, and the tenderness of pity made me see in this grieving, lonely woman one I might possibly comfort and sustain.

'Come back to me, my poor Esther!' I said. 'Let me take care of you, and complete your life; and do you help me with mine.'

For a moment she did not speak, but she drew my hand across her lips and kissed it

tenderly. Then she roused herself, pushed back her hair, and cleared her eyes.

'No,' she said, a touch of regret in her face; 'I should be denying God and betraying the cause of righteousness to live with you again. You are unconverted and I am His servant; and there can be no true union between us. We cannot come together again. It would be faithlessness and perjury while you are what you are!'

'My dear, what nonsense all this is!' I said. 'What a sacrifice of reality for illusion and of things for words! How far better for both of us it would be if you would see life in a more rational light, and make the best of the days which remain to us. Have you no duty to me, Esther? In all that world for which you sacrifice yourself, have I no place, no claim? Yet I would be your best friend and protector if you would let me!'

'No,' said Esther softly, but yielding no more for all her softness than

yields a rock which is covered a foot deep with moss. 'I have no duty towards one who denies the truth. I have no part in your life and you have no claim on mine; and to be your wife again would be a sin. So let us think of something else. I will read you this last poem by Victor Hugo—or shall it be one of Channing's sermons?'

What could I do? Against such a strong principle of repugnance, it would have been useless to say more; and I had too much self-respect to court my own wife in vain. From this day I finally accepted my position, without either the wish or the endeavour to change it. She lives in her way, I in mine; and we meet on each side the 'gulf that separates heart from heart,' neither wishing it bridged over. She has even dropped my name. She calls herself now Mrs. Kirkland Lambert; and when she speaks of her 'husband,' she means Joshua.

Some time ago a thing came into my life which caused me more pain than many other events of more importance. It was a thing which humiliated me on every side—as a man of the world who should have seen more clearly, and as a man who wished to do good and who did harm instead.

I had taken an unfurnished apartment in the house of a man who had been a butler in a family where the wife had been a lady's-maid. They were by no means coarse nor vulgar, having caught that superficial tone of refinement proper to well-conditioned upper servants; and they seemed to be, and were, as honest and straightforward as most people who live on others. They also professed for me a great deal of kindly feeling outside their trade profit; in which, as it was backed up by many uncovenanted attentions, and by uniform good-nature, I believed, according to the credulous sym-

pathy inseparable from an affectionate disposition. It is so easy to me to like and so pleasant to be liked, that, when the gold of kindness is paid over to me, I for the most part neglect to ring it, but accept it as it offers itself—as true metal, genuinely minted, and capable of bearing the test of handling.

These people, the Penders, had an only child; a daughter at this time about nineteen; for whom they had great expectations, having done the best for her within their power. She had been educated at a boarding-school, whence she had returned with a shallow knowledge of many things, some literary aptitude, desires beyond her means to gratify, and the wildest and widest social ambition. She was clever, quick to understand, with undoubted imagination, though she failed in constructive faculty; and the dream of her life was to 'get on,' as she called it—that is, to leave the house where at the best she was only the landlady's daughter, and to have carriages

and fine dresses, money and amusements, like those others whom she had known at school. She was not beautiful—scarcely pretty; but she had good colouring and vivacity. And, as a man, I was not very severe on a certain pertness of manner which amused me, though I can understand that it would have set the teeth of her own sex on edge.

When Mrs. Pender showed me the girl's productions, crude as they were, I saw the possibility of making something of them and her, and offered to give her lessons in composition and to help her with her studies. It satisfied my democratic instinct to put my hand to this work of levelling-up from the lower ranks, and lifting out of her inherited position one whose talent and ambition deserved better things than the continuance of her mother's business of keeping a lodging-house. I soon began to feel a really paternal interest in the girl. She was so quick and bright that it made teaching her

both pleasant and easy. Moreover, she amused me. She was so naïve in her feminine affectations and impertinences; so frank in her girlish liking for sweetmeats and plum-cake; so audacious in her bold conclusions from slender premises, that she enlivened my lonely evenings not unpleasantly.

And I confess I like to hear the frou-frou of a woman's dress about me. I like to hear the softer tones of her voice, and to look at her shining hair and the smooth outlines of her flower-like face. The action of her small hands with their slender wrists, and the jingle of her trinkets, please me. The sense of her softness, sweetness, and dainty smallness compared to my own sinewy bulk, and the feeling that I can protect her if need be, soothe what I suppose is my masculine vanity. And I feel more at home with her now, in my old age, than I do with my own sex. Men often rasp me, while women never fatigue. Though I was not so old when this affair

with Katie Pender took place as I am now, still I was old enough to feel at least the foreshadowings of all this quasi-degradation of age.

It was, then, a kind of consolation to have this girl come to my rooms in the evening, when I was tired with my own work and feeling solitary and out of gear. Her freshness and youth, and the diverting boldness with which she caught up and adopted as her own my hints and suggestions—and soon the, rather too forward perhaps, rather too pert and free, but, all the same, not unpleasant kind of familiarity she threw into her manner—made the hours go yet more smoothly. I did not want to be only a schoolmaster. I preferred that she should look on me as a half-paternal friend.

Interested as I was in her, however, I could not blind myself to the disastrous want of earnestness and thoroughness in my young pupil, which I did my best to

combat. She did not care to be, nor to do; she only desired to appear to be, and to seem to do. She would adopt a phrase, a fact, without knowing what it meant, content if it gave a false air of knowledge and a superficial brilliancy to her work. If asked to verify, she floundered, and tried to save herself by bold conjecture or random explanation—which at least had the merit of audacity. Thus, having read in a story she was writing the phrase: 'Going to Canossa,' I asked her: 'What is going to Canossa, Katie?'

'Doing what you don't like,' said Katie, making a respectable shot in the air.

'But who went to Canossa?' I persisted.

'Bismarck,' said Katie.

She had read the phrase in the paper, and had caught something of the meaning, which she had not attempted to really understand.

It was the same with words. She hated

looking out a word to get its real meaning; and as for derivations and roots, she had for these a kind of horror that was comical in its excess. But she liked to pick up new phrases, new expressions, and to use them liberally, if more than loosely; and she was fond of the stock quotations, which she always carefully guarded with inverted commas.

'They make the page look furnished,' she said in excuse, when I remonstrated. 'They are as pretty as curls on one's forehead.'

'But they are bad style,' I said. 'You ought never to use a grand word when a simple one will serve your turn, unless you are writing scientifically, when you are bound to the scientific vocabulary. And if you employ these old worn-out phrases and quotations, at least leave them undistinguished by your favourite curls, as you call them. Who wants a sign-post for such a phrase as better late than never, which

I see you have put between inverted commas ?'

'Bother !' said Katie laconically, as she scored out the offending scratches.

These efforts at literature were only a means to an end with Katie. If she could have made money in any other way, she would. She would have rather played at rouge-et-noir or 'little horses' than have written the finest book of the generation, if she could have made sure that her stakes would have turned up doubled. It would have been less trouble and more amusement. She took no kind of pleasure in her work for its own sake, but, as I have said, looked on it as simply a money-spinner to give her gold for her own uses.

In her plans for the future, her father and mother had no place. All was for herself alone. If she had had the trouble, was she not entitled to the reward? She thought so and meant to take it. Once when I gave

her mother a small chamber in the golden palace of her dreams, she tossed her fair frizzly head and put on her pretty little pert air—an air that suited her Roxalana nose and bright, sharp, hazel eyes, as much as Esther's steadfast gaze and placid smile suited her Madonna-like face.

'Oh, mamma must take care of herself!' she said. 'She and papa get on better together than her and me.'

Only I am afraid she said 'pa' and 'ma.'

'Than she and I, Katie,' I ruled, in my quality of pedagogue.

'Of course I know that! I said "she and I," so what is the good of taking me up so short?' said Katie without blushing.

All this would doubtless have been very disheartening, had Katie Pender been a boy, or had I been a woman. But the mysterious influences of sex make us forgive in the opposite camp things which would be fatal in our own; and what man of my age

could be extreme to mark amiss the follies of a young girl of Katie's?—whom moreover he is teaching and perhaps keeping from mischief. For there were certain loose points in my young friend's character which often made me tremble for her future. Her desire to have money was so intense—her love of pleasure, dress, display, delights, so unbridled.

'I would do anything to be rich!' she used to say, with a kind of passionate energy that seemed to open the door to really terrible possibilities. 'I do believe I would commit murder for it! I know I should, if I was sure not to be found out.'

'You will get money if you work steadily,' I said. 'You have it in you.'

'Work!' said Katie, making a little grimace. 'I hate work.'

'I am afraid, however, your scheme of murder will not quite answer,' I said lightly.

'Something else might,' she returned gravely.

I have no power on the press. Outsiders think I have, on account of my long literary life and early connection with journalism. But if it came to a pinch, I could get nothing done for myself through favour, still less shoulder up another. I explained this twenty times to Katie, as I have explained it more than twenty to others. On the twenty-first she went back to her old formula:

'You could if you would; but you won't.'

This meant that I could if I would get her story of about two and a half ordinary octavo volumes run through a magazine, of which I knew the editor and in which I myself often wrote. But to know a man well enough to dine with him once in the season is not to have his business judgment in one's pocket; and the strongest recommendation in the world goes for nothing, if made by one without power in favour of another who has not hit the mark. The

very length of the story was in its disfavour. It was too long or too short, and an awkward quantity to handle for either a magazine or book issue. But this had been one of my recalcitrant little pupil's acts of wilfulness wherein she would not be advised. To compress into two or lengthen into three volumes, would have taken time and cost trouble; and she would not submit herself to my maturer judgment. In consequence of which her manuscript was returned; and she made me responsible for her failure.

I was very sorry for the poor child. She had been so confident of success that she had discounted her hopes and borne herself as if all her unhatched eggs had been stalwart feathered fowl. She had bought jewellery and dresses and feminine rubbish of all kinds, to the extent of thirty pounds; and this was a sum utterly beyond her power to meet or land, failing the acceptance of her manuscript. She dared not tell her parents. Fond as they were of her,

they liked their money better; and Katie would have had a bad quarter of an hour had she confided her perplexities to them. Meantime, her debts pressed and her creditors refused to wait. The summing-up of it all was—an act of good-natured weakness on my part which led to all the rest. It was the initial loosening of the foundations which ended in the overthrow. I gave her the money to pay her debts, and in return she gave me a kiss; which I took as I should have taken it from my own daughter. But she startled me a little by saying very demurely, as she looked up at me from under her brows, her head bent down:

'I wonder what my mamma would say, if she knew that I had given you a kiss and you had given me thirty pounds?'

'Say?' I answered. 'Well, she would say it was dear at the price!'

'It might be dearer,' said Katie simply.

After this Katie adopted a curious man-

ner to me—partly mysterious, partly familiar—as if we had some secret in common; —almost as if she had some hold over me. Here was my folly. I should have put my foot down now, and firmly, and I should have ended the whole affair. But I was weak in my good-nature and absurd in my quasi-parental indulgence, and so things drifted; and perhaps I deserved all that I received.

I am sorry to say that Katie got a good deal of money out of me. She was always going to pay me back, but when she did get a story published and paid for she had other claims more dangerous and pressing than mine; and the sums asked for as loans soon became confessed as gifts. Increasing with this facility for gratifying them, her demands became at last too onerous; and I found myself forced to make a stand. I was willing to help her to a moderate extent, but I could not carry her on my shoulders for life. Besides, I did not really care for her.

I had by now only a very feeble interest in herself, and none in her work; for I saw that she had no ambition of a noble kind, and only, as I say, desired success because of its result—money. So the end had to come, as the end of all false hopes and fancies must; and one evening, when she brought in the customary tale of her embarrassments, I put up my first stockade.

'I am sorry,' I said; 'but I cannot help you any more. Let me advise you again, as a man who has worked hard for his own hand—be less extravagant. Do not get into debt, and never buy what you cannot pay for at the time. Do not treat a possible gain as a certain possession. I am qualified to give you this advice, for I have kept myself free from debt from the first year of my working life up to now; and this has been done by self-denial and care.'

'What am I to do, if you do not help me?' said Katie, rather defiantly. 'You have accustomed me to look to you for

help, and it is mean of you to throw me over now.'

'My good Katie, I told you last time that I was not able to go on with this,' I returned. 'Do you know how much you have had in six months?—just a hundred pounds. And a hundred pounds to a girl in your position, spent in dress and jewellery and going down to Ascot, and all the rest of it, is too much.'

'In my position!' said Katie in a flame. 'What is my position so different from other girls' that I should never have any pleasure?'

'Our position is determined by our means,' I answered. 'If we have not money for this or that, we cannot help it, and we must go without. And it is not every girl who spends a hundred pounds in six months, with only a few trinkets and silk gowns to show for it.'

'It was your fault,' said Katie, with a certain cruel justice. 'You ought not to

have begun it from the first. And either you should have got my stories taken or you should not have encouraged me. You are bound to help me now, seeing where you have brought me. It is you who have ruined me.'

'I do not quite follow that argument,' I said gravely, keeping down my temper with just a conscious little effort. 'Because I have done my best for you in teaching you, and your work has not been accepted, I do not see why I should have you on my hands for life. I have other claims; and remember, I am a poor man myself.'

Katie's face flamed, and her passion with her face. She burst out into a torrent of invectives of which I remember nothing but a few epithets, and a general feeling of scalding water and fizzing fire-works. Then she flung herself out of the room—her last words containing a vague threat of some tremendous catastrophe to happen before long, unless I would assist

her as I had taught her to expect I would.

The next day, however, she came and threw herself at my feet, clasping my knees and praying for forgiveness, weeping the while as if her heart would break, and sobbing hysterically.

It was a desperate pain to me to see the girl thus humiliate herself. All forms of abjectness, of grovelling, are worse to me than the wildest insolence; and I feel myself degraded in the degradation of another. I told Katie to get up, and I tried to lift her from the ground; but she clung to my knees with a grasp too tight and tenacious to be released, vowing all the time that she would not—she would not—unless I would say that I forgave her. She was broken-hearted—she was ill with sorrow and crying—she had cried all night—and she would never be happy again unless I said: 'Katie, I forgive you.'

And I—I committed my second act of

folly;—and forgave her. I believed in her sincerity, in the genuine source of her tears, in her sorrow and repentance. I was old and she was young. It is for us who are old to show pity for the young—pity for their follies, their exaggerations, their faults, and above all, their sins against ourselves. It is for us to teach them the wise tenderness of magnanimity — to give them a practical lesson in benevolence, self-command, unselfishness. If we are not pitiful, who will be? If we cannot forgive, who shall?

Besides, I had already taught myself to forgive. I had forgiven that young artist woman who had quietly stolen money out of my purse while I was out of the room—on an errand for her benefit. I had forgiven more than one traducer; and I had said to myself: 'Strength can afford to pardon baseness.'

So I put my principles into practice once again; and this time I pardoned the

outrage, believing that I was sowing good seed and doing the girl the service which comes from example.

For a few days all went well between Katie and myself, and I congratulated myself on the value of acted morality when I saw her modest mien, her renewed industry, her self-restrained air. But it was not for long. That pitchfork never does succeed in the end; and it did not now. Her former outbreak and my leniency were, in a manner, the spring-board whence she took her next leap into the arena of insolence; and we had another scene, even more violent than the first, when she asked me again for money and again I refused it.

Weak as I had been, and sorry as I was for her, I thought it best to let her finally understand that she must not depend on me, nor on anyone but herself, for what she wanted. I knew no better way to stem the tide of foolish extravagance which had set in than to make her feel her own re-

sponsibility. It cost me something to be firm. All that I have just said of the conduct of the old to the young plucked at my heart and troubled my conscience; for it is hard to persuade one's self that one is doing right when one gains by the process. Pleasure and self-interest somehow take the backbone out of virtue; and the most robust moralist may confess to qualms when his pocket is the fuller by just so much devotion to his principles.

Nevertheless, I held on; and Katie's flames, though they scorched me, did not consume.

Then suddenly, swift as a flash she calmed down, raised her eyes quite humbly, and said in a low voice: 'I am sorry I spoke as I did. You have been very good to me—far too good—and I have been an ungrateful beast.'

A few tears dropped quietly from her eyes as she spoke. There was no passionate bewailing, no hysterical tumult, as

in the first scene. It was, on the contrary, a very womanly and dignified repentance which touched me profoundly; and I knew myself well enough to know that I would have yielded to a dead certainty had she not abruptly left the room. She did not hear me call to her to come back. Had she, I would have given her what she wanted.

The next morning Mrs. Pender came, as usual, to receive her orders. Her face wore a curious expression—doubtful, distressed, half-inquiring, half-suspicious—all underscored by a certain timid pleasure as if afraid to trust itself.

After we had said what we had to say about the weather, the gas, the water and the dinner, she put back a chair into its place, wiping the back with her apron and fingering it nervously. Then she cleared her throat and began, as if speech were a little difficult to her:

'You are very kind to my daughter, sir,

and I am sure both me and her father feel it much; but, if you will let me say so, I don't think you are quite judicious. My Katie is as good a girl as ever lived, but she is young yet and rather too fond of dress and all that. We didn't say anything to you before. A gold watch and chain, and a few brooches and bangles—well, they don't come amiss. And, of course, if she makes money, as she says, by her writing, she is right to spend it on her clothes as she likes. But when you come to diamond rings—then I think, sir, if you'll allow me, I must ask you not to. Diamond rings are not for the like of Katie, for all that she will not be a pauper when me and her father dies.'

All this was said with evident embarrassment, but with the verbal smoothness of one who has learned a lesson by heart and repeats it word for word without stumbling.

'Diamond rings!' I cried. 'What do you mean?'

Mrs. Pender looked at me with a little alarm. It struck me at the time that she looked at me as if I were mad.

'That beautiful diamond ring of yours that you gave Katie last night,' she answered. 'But I told her I would never let her wear it; and I want you to take it back, if you will, sir. Katie asked her father to change it into money, which would be more useful to her than them stones on her hand; but I stopped that. If, however, you like to give her a trifle, not to let her feel disappointed, I will not say nay; but that is as you like yourself, sir. You are not bound to do it if you don't choose.'

Now, what was I to do?—tell Mrs. Pender the truth—that I had not given the girl that one costly gem I possessed — that diamond ring which Cordelia Gilchrist had given me, and which I did not wear, jewellery not being in my way? Was I to tear the mother's heart and ruin the daughter's character by proclaiming her the

thief and liar she was ?—or was it the higher duty to accept the situation, with all its fraud and desecration, and save the mother's pain while I shielded the girl's repute ?

I do not know how long I kept silent. I was so overwhelmed by the discovery of Katie's audacity and shamelessness, so perplexed between the conflicting duties of truth and kindness, that I was, as it were, struck dumb ; and what Mrs. Pender must have thought of me was as much a mystery as the rest.

'I hope you are not vexed with me, sir,' said Mrs. Pender at last.

Her voice roused me.

'I would rather your daughter had brought it back to me herself,' I answered, speaking to the truth and not to the appearances of things.

She stared at me hard, and I could see that some unpleasant suspicion was in her mind ; but I was too much annoyed by the whole affair to care what she thought.

I knew the truth; and, knowing that, I was indifferent to the rest. That I should be suspected of heaven knows what iniquity would be only according to the irony of fate, which punishes our moral successes far more than our failures, and makes us suffer when we do right while it sets us in high places when we do wrong.

This little episode was really one of the most painful of the minor trials of my life. I, at my age and with my wide experience, to have been tricked and betrayed by a wretched little half-educated girl to whom I had done so many kindnesses, and to be bound by the law under which I strove to live to accept and not retaliate—to suffer and not betray—all the while knowing that this young creature was laughing in her sleeve at the very qualities on which she had planned the success of her crime—it was indeed a matter for anger and humiliation. I was disgusted with her and that mean phase of human nature represented in

her; but I was more disgusted with myself —with my want of common-sense and firmness in not refusing the girl at first—my want of perspicacity in not seeing through her shallow baseness of character—my molluscous soft-heartedness which had allowed me to be so played on. No one, I think, ever belaboured himself more savagely than I cudgelled myself at this time, nor was less satisfied with any part of his moral acreage.

Neither was I sure that I had done right in not telling Mrs. Pender the truth. Who was I, that I should ordain a fellow-creature to live in a fool's paradise, because I shrank from the pain of inflicting pain? Would it not have been better to have given the mother the power of rebuke, and by so much therefore the stronger leverage of reform? Who so fit as a mother to know all about her child—even when to know all would be to discover unsuspected vices and even undreamt-of crime?

Yet, would she have believed it, had I told her the truth? Between her daughter's word and mine, I think that mine would have been the weaker. Katie would have sworn to the gift, I to the theft; who would have judged between us? For I could not have denied that I had given her such and such sums of money; and if the one, there was no valid reason why not the other. For all that, my tortured conscience accused me daily, and my life at this moment was by no means pleasant.

Of course this ugly little episode put an end to all my help in literary matters, and was the seal of Katie's banishment from my rooms. Soon also it was the cause of my leaving the house; for the whole thing was too painful to me, and I was in a false position throughout. I was conscious, moreover, that underneath in the hidden depths lurked other matters than those which came to the front. I saw this by Mrs. Pender's manner; and I guessed

what that little scaramouch had said; but I thought it best not to inquire too closely. So, when my quarter was out, I gave notice, and in due time left the house where I had made such a bad investment of hope and endeavour.

The sequel was a terribly sad one. Some years after this I was walking home one night when I heard a woman's step behind me, closing on me. Soon some one pulled me by the coat, and said softly:

'Mr. Kirkland! Mr. Kirkland!'

I turned round, and underneath her paint and haggard misery, her tattered finery and pitiful attempt at smartness, I recognised the wreck of poor, conscienceless, pleasure-loving Katie Pender. She had plunged headlong into the abyss for that cursed love of gewgaws and dissipation by which many a better woman than she has been destroyed; and here was the end!—ruin, degradation, starvation; all for the sake of a few fine dresses and some days of false flourish!

She had begun by robbing me, she ended by robbing her parents. She had begun by giving me pain, she ended by breaking her mother's heart; while her father took to drink, as the best way he knew to meet his sorrow and conquer his despair. Now the end was near for her. The evil was too deep to cure, do what one would for her; and I did what I could. I at least managed that she should die decently, and so far in comfort.

I found her father and brought him to her bedside; and I made him forgive her at the last. It was a hard fight to get this done; but I reasoned him into a more generous frame of mind than he brought with him at the first. The ruin had been too terrible to be lightly passed over, even with the help of paternal love. For, as strong as had been that love, so strong and deep was the wrath following on the shame and sin and sorrow that the girl had caused. The hoarded savings of years gone; the house

where they had lived so respectably given up after the bailiffs had been put in; the wife whom he had really loved dead of distress; the daughter, on whom both parents had lavished so much hope, so much pride, a mere castaway from whom good women drew back their skirts:—yes, it all made forgiveness hard! But he broke down at last into a flood of tears, and taking her in his arms, sobbed out:

'My girl! my girl! May God forgive you as freely do I, your father!'

So far the tragedy of the past was redeemed, and the sharpness of death's sting was blunted.

But the question always remains with me as a sore thought:—How far was I unconsciously answerable for this terrible destruction? If I had never tried to play Providence—if I had been as stern as Fate and Law are stern, and had suffered the natural consequences to follow unchecked on action—would it have happened at all? I

think not. Sinless I might be, but I was Cain as well. I had slain my little sister in my well-meant efforts to help her; and through her I had destroyed two worthy people who had never done aught but good and kindness to me. Wise after the event, I could reason it all out now and follow the crooked course step by step. At the time I seemed to be going quite the other way. It is not only in the material wilderness that we walk round in a circle, or lose our way altogether, when we believe that we are going straight as the crow flies and making a bee-line for a certain point. The moral path is just as unsatisfactory and as delusive. But to do evil where we seek to do good, to ruin a life we have done our best to improve, is the most painful of all these wanderings—these strayings. Sinless Cains—yes, there are many of these in the world, on whose brow Conscience has set the brand! Homicides by misadventure! The misadventure was unintentional, but

the homicide is not the less a fact; and the death of that poor creature is no less due to our own hand. Yet, if we did not play Providence for our fellow-creatures, what would become of them? And is it not braver and better to dare the shame of failure, with its after-consequence of self-reproach, than to let the struggling wretch sweep by in the current, and not stir one's self to help, in fear lest one should be too weak to pull to shore and unable to set firmly on the dry land? Have we not to be brave to conscience and to dare self-reproach, as well as to withstand other dangers and support other pains without flinching?

CHAPTER VII.

VARIOUS legacies have been left me in my life—pictures, trinkets, ornaments and money. Only one has been paid over to me. This was the legacy left me by one who had been the very heart of kindness—the truest of all true friends to those who trusted him; and it came through the hands of her who is the soul of honour, as loyal as he had been faithful and with generosity and sympathy to match his. Now, however, I received a legacy which was duly paid over and delivered, no one disputing the claim. This was a young girl of eighteen, left to my charge by her

father, my brother-in-law, who thought I would do well for my dead sister's only child, and that I would supply his place, at least so far as tenderness and paternal consideration went. Thus my niece, Claudia Hamilton, came to me to be my daughter, and the order of my life was changed to receive her.

I do not want to be hyperbolic, but I do not know the words which would be too highly coloured to express this sweet child's charm. Throughout my long life I have never seen anyone more thoroughly and essentially courteous in mind than she. I cannot express it differently. Obedient, gentle, steadfast, unselfish, Claudia was a typical woman of the best kind—thinking of others more than of herself, and in honour preferring one another to the letter. But she had nothing of the oppressiveness belonging to conscious unselfishness offering itself for admiration. She did not make you

feel, as some do, that she was making this sacrifice for your sake, foregoing this personal pleasure, undertaking this burdensome office, all for your gain and delight; but she did everything with that unconscious sincerity which gives additional value to an unselfish action—she radiated thought and consideration, love and attention, as the sun radiates heat or the earth sends up the dew. I do not know the moral faults she had. She must have had some; but either they were so superficial they got brushed away in a passing breath, or so deeply buried underneath her virtues they never came to the surface at all.

Graceful and artistic, she was by no means markedly intellectual. She had excellent taste and as excellent judgment. But she had a certain slowness of thought which grew to be one of her charms to me. It was so pretty to see her soft face full of perplexity and doubt, and to hear her beg for a little time of delay, wherein she might

think over a thing and make up her mind about matters which most people would have settled off-hand and decided on the instant—that I preferred this brooding, slow-paced reflectiveness to its antithetical sharpness. More especially as, when she had thought over a choice, a situation, and finally made up her mental packet, she almost always came to a just conclusion and showed a rather rare amount of reasonableness and balance. But she was undeniably slow in the process. Where Kate Pender had been like the sharpened point of a needle, Claudia Hamilton was as a smooth and rounded pearl. And after the needle-point, that smooth, fair pearl was decidedly a relief.

She was pretty too; and that went for something. She had hair and eyes which would have been a fair stock-in-trade for a professional beauty. The sun had entangled itself in the one; the others were soft as velvet—like great brown moths, sleepy, tender,

almost pathetic in their patient quietness. Her hands and arms were absolutely perfect; and her figure was slight and singularly graceful in its lines. So pretty, so well-bred, so charming in her character, so sweet in her temper—she was a prize; and when I had fully learned the true nature of my latest legacy, I was well content with the bequest.

This child gave me back my home. I took a pleasant house, and engaged as her chaperon a well-mannered, well-educated lady, as frigid as an iceberg so far as men were concerned, but sympathetic and maternal enough to girls. As I was married, she could not have any designs on me; and even if I had been a bachelor, she would have had none. So we made a delightful home of it—we three units coming together in this casual way and soon welding into a compact and harmonious whole. And for four years all went merry as a wedding-bell. There was

not a hitch anywhere; not a cross no heavier than a shred of pith; not a stumbling-block no bigger than a straw. We got on together in the perfect accord proper to people whose intimacy never degenerated into familiarity, and who respected themselves too much not to respect one another.

Those four years were the happiest of my life—the only perfect years when I was free from clouds or storms. I had as my daily companion this dear child whom I loved like my daughter; and her chaperon, Mrs. Olly, was all that she should have been —quiet, unobtrusive, well-bred, high-principled, and of good influence in things purely feminine over Claudia. Our joint moneys—for my niece had her own fortune —made a home of sufficient luxury for all moderate wishes; and I was both happy and proud when I introduced my pretty girl to my friends as some one claiming all men's admiration. For her sake I once

more took up the lapsed habits of society, and went out into the world I had so long abandoned. I liked to see how much she was admired, and how prettily she bore herself among the youths and men who fluttered round her, and singed their wings to no purpose save their own pain. She was fond of admiration to a certain extent, just as she was coquettish in her dress to a certain extent; and I was content that it should be so. I would not have wished her other than she was—of her age, and perfect in that; but not unnatural either in self-abnegation or asceticism. We went a great deal abroad, where she was besieged with offers of marriage from men who were in love with her beauty truly, but to whom her fortune—magnified by report—had also something to say in the matter. But no one would do—no one exactly fitted; and she kept her heart whole and her fancy free and did not wish for a change. She was so happy as

she was, she used to say with her sweet half-tremulous smile, she did not wish to turn down the present page. And sometimes she added that she did not think any one would care for her so much as I did. She was about right there. For, my love had idealized her, and I saw in her only her angel—her highest, best and flawless self; and even affectionate husbands do not often do this with their wives. It takes the distance which lies between a parent and a child to give this power; standing close, shoulder to shoulder and on an equal height, makes it almost impossible. And so far the old saying holds true: 'It is better to be an old man's darling than a young man's slave.'

In an evil hour—wretch that I am to say so!—there was brought to our house a young barrister, Launcelot Haseltine, already beginning to be favourably known in his profession. And with his advent the web of peace which my sweet Lady of Shalott

had been hitherto content to weave floated wide—the mirror through which she had seen the world of love at second-hand cracked—and she found her fate and sealed my sorrow.

I had nothing to say against the marriage. It was all lucent and lustrous; and if Claudia wished it, what was I that I should object? The end of all things dear and pleasant to me had to come. The enchanted castle of my content had to fall; and I had once more before me the loneliness which this quasi-daughterhood had dispelled.

Mr. Haseltine received a good appointment in India, and I looked into my Claudia's pale face for the last time on board the steamer which in her bore away all my joy.

I tried hard to be grateful for what had been, and not to sour the past by lamentations in the present; to be cheerful and to take an active interest in things and

people as I had done when my heart was at rest and I was happy in my home. But human nature was too strong for me; and I had again the old conflict to go through—again to fight with my wild-beasts of sorrow and disappointment and loss, till I had conquered them—unless I would be conquered by them.

The time was very dreary, very sad. I thought that all love had died out for the rest of the years I had to live. I promised myself I would have no more enthusiasms, make no more close friendships, open my inner heart to no ideal for the future;—never again—never again! Love had ever brought me pain in excess of joy; and henceforward I would live on the broad common-land of friendships that were kindly, refreshing, sustaining, but not exclusive to me; friendships where I was one among others, and where I made numbers stand in stead of specialities. I would have no more private gardens cultivated with my heart's

blood, to see them laid waste by disappointment, separation, death.

What supreme folly it was to put one's happiness into the power of others—to hang one's peace like a jewel round another's neck! The wise man keeps his own possessions sure. It is only lunatics who scatter their treasures far and wide among those who, by the law of their own life, cannot guard them. And what was I but a lunatic, with this insatiable need of loving —this inexhaustible power of giving? Why had I ever let this dear child creep so far into my heart, so that when the appointed end of a girl such as she came, as come it must, I should suffer as I did? For indeed her loss was quite as severe a trial to me as the break-up of my married life had been, when I had had to begin again the struggle proper to youth, without the hope, the energy, the unworn nerves of youth, and further handicapped by the sense of disappointment and illusion. Truly I was

an unlucky investor of affection!—but the strange law of loss—the strange ruling of fate that I should not root—had never pressed so hardly on me as now. For long months I was spiritually sick, so that sometimes I despaired of my own recovery.

By degrees, however, the old recuperative force made itself felt, and my vigorous vitality reasserted itself. I recovered my moral tone. My power of hope and love came back to me; and life was not over for me. Struck down again and again as I had been, I was not conquered; and I should continue the fight till yet later in the evening. The sun was westering rapidly, but daylight still remained. The present had its flowers, the future might bear its fruits; and neither I nor nature was exhausted. My wounds healed as they had healed before, and I seemed to wake as from sleep and to bestir myself after. It was impossible for me to live this self-centred kind of existence—

this retracted, mutilated moral life, and not put out my feelers for that touch of my kind which is to my soul what breath is to my body.

The first person who roused me out of the emotional lethargy into which I had fallen was a mere boy—the youngest of all who had ever interested me. When I first saw him, he was only seventeen. When I came to know him well, and love him, he was just two years older.

I suppose my love for my step-children had roused into full activity that parental instinct which most men have in a greater or less degree. For since the break-up of my home, all my lovers—if the word may be allowed me—had been young creatures who had been to me like my sons or my daughters. My interest in them had been of a more tender, less exacting and less reciprocal kind than for men and women of my own standing. That is, it had been purely a paternal interest, such as is proper

to a man of my age when selfhood has contracted to a mere speck in one's horizon, and the future of the son has taken all the space which one's own possibilities and desires once filled.

It did not need an abnormal amount of the paternal instinct to be interested in Arthur Ronalds. The difficulty would have been to have passed him by as one just of the ordinary kind—no more beautiful and no less faulty than the rest of the world. Far from being thus just of the ordinary kind, the boy stood out as something unapproachable. His intellect was of the finest quality. His head and face were curiously like the bust of the young Augustus. His character combined the strength of a man with the purity of a woman. He was essentially a measure of the highest standard to which humanity can attain under its present conditions. Quick to learn; accurate in memory; with a critical faculty not often found in an intelligence even more mature than his, nor with

an experience far wider; full of poetic fancies and at the same time philosophic and constructive to a remarkable degree; innocent of evil in his own person, but already a rationalist in the calm way in which he could look on human life as it is—analyze passions and accept results — examine motives, detect error, and assign beliefs and practices to their causes;—his youth, full of charm as it was, seemed to promise a manhood of surpassing brilliancy and power. In him I saw one of the world's future leaders of thought and epoch-makers in the history of mental evolution. His name would be immortal, for his work would be eternal; and in the long vista of ages yet to come I saw the light of his mind as an illuminating power equal to that of Aristotle and Plato, of Shakespeare and Newton, of Galileo and Darwin.

We soon became great friends; and I had but one regret, that I had not been his father—but one fear, the delicacy

of his health. His brain had developed at the expense of his physique; and the consequence was a certain constitutional delicacy which gave those who loved him cause to doubt and dread. At nineteen, to possess the learning and the critical acumen of a man of twice that age means corresponding loss somewhere. The law of compensation is inexorable, like all the other laws of nature, and a weighted balance necessitates a kicked beam. Meanwhile, Arthur enjoyed life in his own way, though that way was not according to the robust athleticism dear to the average youth. And he, too, had his romances, his dreams, his unacted poems, like any other.

His great dream of all was the kind of life that he would make for himself, and the good that he would do, when he should come of age and be in all things his own master. He was heir to ten thousand a year; and ten thousand a year seems like ten millions to the young—more especially

when they spend nine thousand five hundred in projects, and content themselves with the remainder for their own modest share. Arthur did not often speak of his future wealth. When he did, it was for the foundation of Chairs and Professorships, for the advancement of science and philosophy, for the endowment of research, which he sketched out as his intended contribution to the great sum of the general good. To this he added the maintenance of those families of scientific men which had been left in poverty by the premature death of the breadwinner.

He was a nineteenth-century St. Paul, substituting philosophy for theology, and the love of humanity for faith in Christ. A grand and noble life lay like a pathway of light before him. In him I saw that ideal self which lives in each of us—a man purged of all my special faults, superior to all my weaknesses, and strong enough to consolidate the hopes and aspirations which had helped me to live but which I had

done so little to realize. An epitome of all humanity as is each individual, potentialities for good are as real as those for evil; and the master in our own special line of thought or being is our translated self, perfected and endowed.

This is especially true of the young when judged by the old. We have reached our limit and fallen short of our aim. But they are as yet unexhausted. Who knows what hidden wealth lies within the years? Who can measure the possibilities of the future? Torch-bearers as they are, we see them seize the light which we have done our best to carry so far—but they will bear it farther. They will go beyond our halting-place—and here again we shall be the dead selves from which they will rise to higher things. This, after all, is the great link and continuity of human society—the essential meaning of paternity, which in its turn is self-renovation—personal resuscitation.

There was no point of speculative opinion

on which Arthur and I differed, save that he was perhaps more a necessitarian than I, and less tender to the faith which he had not been taught to accept. He had none of the old memories, the sympathetic sentiment of childhood, to blunt the keen edge of criticism. And, never having believed, for his own part, either in the divinity of Christ or the inspiration of the Bible, he was unable to put himself in the position of those who had believed, or did yet believe. Save for such portions of the philosophy as seemed to him more beautiful, more true, the whole scheme of Christianity ranked no higher with him than that of Hindùism or the Greek Pantheon; and it fell below the dignity of Buddhism and the strength of Mohammedanism.

The one wonder of his intercourse with me was that there should have ever been the time when I had believed in the creation of the world in six days, in the Incarnation, the Atonement, the miracles,

and the devil; or that I should have hesitated as to my choice when I came to the age of reason. How could anyone with a robust intellect, he used to say, consent to be bound by these cobwebs which one vigorous effort of the reasoning faculty could brush away for ever? How could such a man as I have believed that once upon a time, just as in the fairy-tales, humanity was different from what it is now, save as a matter of relative development? or that things took place eighteen hundred years ago which would be absolutely impossible to-day? Of all follies, this belief in the solution of continuity seemed to him the most foolish; and he did not understand how, at seventeen—his own age when I first knew him—I had ever troubled myself twice about it.

If this absolute negation ab initio so far narrowed his intellectual sympathies, it cleared the groundwork of his thoughts, and saved him from that exhaustion which

both accompanies and follows our struggles to break loose from educational trammels. I could appreciate by my own mental history the value of this stored and conserved energy, and by my own loss, judge of the greater length of the stride it allowed and the time it saved. And if I sometimes wished that Arthur had at one time realized the wonderful feeling of pity for the human sufferings of the man Christ Jesus, reverence for His teaching, adoration of Him as God eternal, and trust in Him as the Saviour of mankind, which makes the poetry of Christianity and is a perpetual possession of memory, I balanced the gain against the loss, and felt that it was better as it was for him and for the world he was to influence.

After I had known Arthur Ronalds for some time, I became acquainted with his aunt, Mrs. Barry. She was the elder sister of his mother, and worthy to have in her veins some of the same blood as ran in his.

At that time I could say nothing more honourable of her. Before I knew her as she was—before she became absolute in my own life—she was relatively of interest and importance because of her relationship with Arthur. And I carried to her both praise and glory as the reflection of my love for him. She was very fond of her marvellous young nephew—considerably fonder indeed, than was his own mother, who would have been better content with a more ordinary son. Having no children of her own and being essentially maternal in her nature—being besides, broad in her philosophy and of an intellectual development capable of understanding his—this boy had taken with Mrs. Barry the place of an adopted son; and she was really more to him of a mother than was anyone else. She had been abroad when I had first known Arthur; which was the reason why I had not seen her until I had become the lad's nearest male friend. But I had heard of her from him, and I was

prepared to find her the more than admirable—the more than lovable—person she was.

I did not much care for his mother, Mrs. Ronalds. She was a slight and flimsy kind of fashionable butterfly who put her salvation in material things, and cared for brains only when they gave artistic results which made her appear more profound than she was. To her way of thinking, Arthur was a 'sport' more curious than beautiful, and she used often to wonder how she had borne a child so unlike herself in all things. His father had been dead for many years; and what the boy was, was due partly to himself and partly to his tutor, a man of greater breadth of thought and deeper scientific attainments than Mrs. Ronalds knew, or could have understood had she known. However, here he was—in his mother's eyes a strange production of nature, an ugly duckling of no special value in the farm-yard nor drawing-

room. That he was a wild and noble swan, who would one day soar up to the skies, she did not believe. He was only 'odd' and 'unlike other boys' to her; and she knew no better commentary than: 'It is a pity he is so extraordinary!'

She was, however, both good-natured and indifferent, so that she did not worry herself nor others. As Arthur was too delicate to go to school, he must be kept at home. Wherefore she gave him this tutor who had been recommended by his guardian; and when she had done this, and furnished and arranged his special set of rooms according to her own ideas, she troubled herself no more about things she could neither alter nor control. For how could she, a mere woman, dive into the mysteries of Latin or Greek, mathematics, logic, philosophy, history, to verify what she did not understand, and make sure that Mr. Satterthwaite was teaching what she would approve? It was either trust or intelligent

interference; and as she could not give the latter, she had sense enough to accord the former, and to abandon the appearance of command with the reality of responsibility. In this way, then, it came about that young Arthur had been moulded into such a widely different form from that which he had inherited. His exceptional powers had received exceptional treatment; and the result was, a lad who, it was no exaggeration to say, promised to be one of the kings of men in the world of thought, when his adolescence should be passed and his maturity fairly reached.

CHAPTER VIII.

MY friendship with Mrs. Barry was still only in this stage of what I may call incidental light, when one day I received from Arthur Ronalds a pencilled note, asking me to go and see him. He was not quite well, he said, and the doctor forbade him to leave the house; would I therefore go to him? He wanted to see me for no special purpose, he added; only for the simple pleasure of a talk. So that, if I were engaged elsewhere, I was not to think twice of his request.

He was always this unselfish creature!—always ready to give up his own desire for

the sake of another; as indeed belongs to the highest class of mind.

I went at once, and found him indisposed but not in actual suffering. He had a slight pain about his heart, was a little feverish and flushed, and certainly too actively brilliant in mind.

'I feel to-day,' he said, 'as if my thoughts ran through my brain in lines of light. And how nimble-footed they are!'

The doctor, whom I met in his room, said there was a certain disturbance of the circulation which would soon pass. He recommended rest and a reclining position; and allowed me, he said, smiling, to say and talk with the patient, provided I did not argue nor let him become excited.

Arthur himself made light of his indisposition. He was always averse from confessing either his transitory ailments or his constitutional delicacy; and he did his best to forget that he was below the average in physical power. He was not foolhardy

in action, but he was both sensitive and reticent in acknowledgment.

We had a long but perfectly quiet talk that day, skimming over many subjects of interest to each and of grave importance to the world at large. It was a synoptical talk—the heads of that Confession of Faith to which we subscribed. But it was Arthur more than I who both took the initiative and gave the affirmative.

Suggested by the fearful sufferings of a certain man we knew, dying by inches of a cancerous affection of the pylorus, we discussed the benefits as well as the dangers attending that euthanasia which has been too noisily advocated and too coarsely ventilated. And we agreed on its advisability, as an act of mercy as well as reasonableness, given the consent of the tortured dying and the strictest safeguards against abuse.

We also went over the whole question of suicide, and the right of a man to cast off

his individual existence, when this has become intolerable. Arthur maintained this right—always with the limitation of those more imperative duties to others which would be abandoned by the act. As, in the case of the bread-winner of the family, who was bound to remain at his post so long as those who depended on him required his support; or with the mother, whose love and care and moral influence were needed by the children—no matter what her own sorrows and weariness might be, she too was bound to remain at her post till no longer needed; or where the happiness of another life was bound up in the continuance of this.

'Then,' he said, 'the martyrdom of life must be bravely borne to the end; and a man may no more take premature rest than he may shirk the battle and slink to the rear before the bugle sounds a retreat. But,' he added, 'outside these conditions of absolute usefulness to others,

I hold that a man is justified in dealing with his life as he would with his money or his books. It is his property; and he is the master of his own possessions.'

He then told me a touching story of a Scottish peasant, by his father's death left the head of the house and caretaker of the family. He was a thoughtful, well-educated, high-principled man; and he accepted the charge laid on him by fate as such a man would. He wrought for, supported, educated and set out for themselves all his younger brothers and sisters; and then there remained to him only his aged mother. For her sake, and to carry his burden loyally to the end, he consented to live; but he made no secret of his intention to kill himself so soon as she should die. He was weary of life, he said. With his mother the last of his duties would be fulfilled; then he might think of himself.

So it all came about. His old mother died and he saw her decently buried. When he

got home from the funeral he said 'Good-night' to his friends, shut the cottage door, and cut his throat.

We met on the matter of cremation, and confessed its superiority to the system of earth interment—especially in view of the increase of the race in civilized centres, and the greater perils therefore run by the living by the greater chances of disease sown with death in the soil.

'I like to think that when I am dead I shall be resolved at once into my original elements—not by the slow and hurtful process of decay, but by the quick purification of fire,' said Arthur, tossing back his hair with a broad sweep of his hand, familiar to him. 'If we can do no more good, it is pleasant to know beforehand that we can do no harm. A negative virtue is better than a positive wrong. And I have my mother's promise.'

'We will add that codicil to your will when the time comes,' I said lightly.

And yet I confess to a certain superstitious creeping of my skin as I spoke. I did not like to hear him talk of his death and burial to-day. And we had wandered among the graves too much as it was.

'Dies datus? Who knows when?' he answered.

'Not yet for you, at all events, my boy. You have your work to do before you can be allowed to sleep!'

I spoke with a rush of strange tenderness, like a flood about my heart. It reminded me of the old Biblical phrase used to express parental love. For indeed he was as my own—the Judah to whom had been given the crown and sceptre of sovereignty; the little Benjamin, born of love and cradled in tenderness from the beginning; the son of my soul and the heir of my spiritual estate—to be greater than I and all those who had gone before him. Had I not been an Englishman, and

ashamed of my own emotion, I should have taken him in my arms and kissed him.

'Yes,' he returned rather slowly; 'I have my work to do. I often wonder if I shall be strong enough to hew down so much as one square yard of the jungle of superstition by which we are hemmed in on all sides—if I shall be able to add even one brick to the great Temple of Truth.'

'Your very existence answers that,' I said. 'What we are is as important as what we do. A noble personality is equivalent to a noble deed.'

'And the end of it all—the condition on which we hold the charter of life—death:—and each individual of no more account than one diatom in the whole mass—the bulk making an important stratum, but each separate unit, as a unit, valueless!'

He said this with a certain philosophic quietness—a realization of individual nothingness—singularly pathetic in view of

the creature he himself was. His very individuality, so grandly beautiful and exalted, seemed of itself the warrant of immortality. And yet, was it in reality more than the individuality of a Swiss cretin, save in the accident of influence on others?

'We know nothing of ultimates,' I said. 'If the Christian heaven or the Mahommedan paradise fails to satisfy the philosopher, we have always the possibilities lying behind the unknown. If we cannot affirm we cannot deny.'

'There is no possibility of individual existence when the machine, the organism which made that individual, dissolves, or rather, I should say, resolves itself into its component parts,' he answered. 'It is the condition on which we live from the beginning. We came out of nothing, and we return to nothing. Willingly or unwillingly, we must accept the law!'

He smiled as he said this, then broke off abruptly into the woman question, on the

main points of which we were thoroughly agreed—neither liking the situation, but both seeing the futility of opposition. For he too, as I, saw in this modern endeavour of women to assimilate themselves to men and to repudiate their own assigned functions, an individually unconscious but practically resultant check to population—inasmuch as the self-sacrifice and quietness demanded of mothers cannot exist with the personal ambition of professional life, with feverish absorption in social excitements, nor with the physical enjoyment of a purely out-of-door life devoted to sport and athletics, like a man's. Thus, the movement, by centering in self the energies needed for the continuance of the race, is, by the very nature of things, a movement in the direction of sterility. It is the analogue of that well-known law, so disastrous to stock-raisers, which makes that, when the breed has been brought to the highest possible point of perfection, it stops—the female refusing to continue it.

Between the two, however, a milky mother of the herd is more valuable than the infertile heifer; and a brave, bright winsome mother does more for humanity in the noble men and women she brings into the world and makes fit to carry on the higher development, than does the sister who prefers individuality and a paying profession to the self-continuance, self-sacrifice and devotion of maternity.

We agreed on the lawfulness of vivisection—the future good of the greater number being of more importance than the sacrifice of the present few. And we saw in the agitation that had been carried on against it as much hostility to science as regard for humane principles—as much fear of what will be revealed, inimical to orthodox belief, as that generous philosophy which includes the whole of living nature in one ring-fence of affinity, and recognises for animals the rights we claim for ourselves. But, accepting as we did,

this ring-fence, this affinity, we agreed that animals were therefore bound to contribute their quota of individual pain to the general good. Even the most humane objectors to vivisection are at one on this in the elemental matters of food and service. For these we may both sacrifice and pain our poor dumb brethren. It is only Knowledge—Science—that has to go bare rather than be nourished by the sorrows of these others.

'Food and service indeed, are primitive conditions, like flint implements or lake dwellings,' said Arthur. 'By increased intellectual needs we add confinement in cages for the purposes of observation—of itself infinitely more distressing to wild beasts and strong-winged birds than the short, sharp pain of a surgical operation, or even inoculation with a disease. Going a step further, and keeping pace with these ever-advancing intellectual needs, we add experimentalizing on the living body for the purposes of demonstration and the discovery

of such secrets of organization as could not be got at in any other way. That benevolence which would create a sacred section because of feebleness, and would forbear to impose a tax necessary for the good of the community because the creatures taxed are unable to remonstrate or resist, is injustice to the whole, however kindly to the part. Here, as in all other things, the gain of the greater number sanctions the sacrifice of the few.'

'The reasonable verdict of scientific men must be the final decision on a matter of scientific need,' I said. 'All the same, the law must be careful to ensure due protection against abuse, and these weakest members of the community must be guarded against needless cruelty.'

'Certainly,' he returned. 'But, I confess, it seems to me that what is called sport stands in as much need of legislative interference as does scientific experimentalization. I suppose this is because I am not

a sportsman myself, and therefore do not understand the pleasure bound up in hunting a hare or winging a pheasant. But I do see the enormous value of knowing how to stamp out cholera and consumption, and all other diseases which now more than decimate the human race. And I see also the quite as enormous value of finding out how the nerves act and are acted upon, and, if possible, of coming to the starting-point of even more important secrets still.'

'Just so,' I said. 'Knowledge is the distinctive possession and most urgent need of man. It must be had at all costs. And to acquire it, men suffer to the full as much as do those poor creatures more directly sacrificed.'

Then we touched on the possibility of educating the masses to think for themselves—to accept responsibilities, and to frame a workable theory of life without the authority of religion and on the platform

only of respect for humanity and doing right for right's sake, according to the law of moral evolution. We spoke again of immortality and the unprovable nature of the whole subject. Yet the strength of the belief—its universality, not only with ignorance, but co-existing with bold thought and scientific habits of mind—were claims to consideration not to be satisfactorily disposed of on the theory of illusion. That Something which lies behind matter is a fact, call it what we will — that Force which is given by intense religious conviction is also a fact. We may not be able to demonstrate the one nor catalogue the other. All the same, they are; and ignorance of the source does not destroy the reality of the outflow. Christ in Heaven, the Saviour of mankind, may be a phantasm of faith; the houris of Islam may be the projections only of a passionate imagination. Nevertheless, for faith in that Christ who will succour and can save—for hope of

that Paradise where houris are the believer's eternal delights—men have died by thousands, and in their death have seen the heavenly images of their hope advancing to receive them.

'But these mysteries of the spiritual life are also matters of comparative evolution,' said Arthur. 'When we come to primitive man—savages who live on raw flesh, and roots and worms; who have no more sense of decency nor chastity than a herd of beasts in the jungle; who cannot count, and whose language is little more than a bestial grunt sharpened to a cry—what spiritual life have we there? And where does this soul, of which we are so sure, begin? If at all, it is a result of evolution, like the rest—a potentiality to be realized by cultivation and endeavour. The grand mistake we have made is to suppose it universal—coincident with life, and as integral to man as are the lungs or the heart—and not something to be shaped and perfected according

to the law which obtains throughout universal nature.'

'Even religionists feel the difficulty of the soulless man,' I said. 'The old phrase, "Ower gude for banning and ower bad for blessing," expresses what, if your theory be correct, would be the condition of a man whose soul had never come to the birth and was abortive and inert.'

'A large—by far the largest proportion,' said Arthur.

'Yes; our Buddhas are very few,' I answered.

'If any,' was the reply. 'But if one knew for certain that the immortality of the individual was in the power of the individual, what a tremendous leverage that would give to lift one into the higher life!'

'Religion, as it stands, gives this leverage,' I said. 'In our search after causes, we must not forget results. Whatever may be the cause of faith, the result is

a power emphatically beyond our normal selves.'

'It would be more certain if we knew that we ourselves were the absolute arbiters of our own eternal destinies,' said Arthur. 'We are weighted rather than helped by the belief that we shall be saved, by faith alone —that grace and mercy will do what self-control has failed to accomplish—that an extraneous power will supplement the halting of resolve and the slackening of endeavour.'

'Spirituality governed by science?' I said.

'Yes,' he answered. 'Else has it no truth.'

We glanced off from this to the boy's own future, when he drew out in fuller detail than ever to me before, his noble schemes for the employment of his fortune when he should come of age—and how he would use, for the advancement of science and the good of the whole human race through the free-

dom of thought and the acquisition of knowledge, the resources which would then be open to him. His belief in the glorious future of mankind was very strong. He looked forward to the time when the passions, which are now cherished as part of the necessary furniture of self-respect, such as jealousy, revenge, resentment—or as lawful excesses of lawful emotions, such as the sickness of love, the unjust partialities of the family, exclusive clanship in any form of association—would be regarded as belonging to the Dark Ages, before the true light had risen. He saw no limit ahead. From the primal cosmic forces to Buddha, Plato, Christ —where was the line drawn, and who should dare to define the point marked No Beyond?

I had never seen him so brilliant nor so beautiful. Take him as the measure of his own possibilities, and what a grand thing indeed that future ideal humanity would be! Arthur Ronalds as the type of the

masculine mind—just, far-seeing, self-controlled, philosophic, altruistic; Mrs. Barry, whom I was getting to know for what she was, as the type of the feminine character—loving, sympathetic, devoted, strong to suffer in her own person without complaint, and, while smarting under her own wounds, able to bear the burdens of others—who could despair of the future? who see in life only a muddle, and in humanity only a failure? Give us time and we will do all! It has taken millions on millions of years to evolve man out of protoplasm; it will take some thousands more for all the savage and the beast to be educated out of him—for knowledge to take the place of ignorance—for reason, self-control, and altruism to be the motive forces of society, rather than passions, appetites and selfishness, whereof the only check is external law.

As I looked at the boy whom I grudged to the dead man who had been his father—seeing in him a future leader of

thought, a future torch-bearer who would carry the light far and high—I noticed a sudden change in his face. He first flushed violently, then turned to a deathly pallor, more grey than white and livid rather than blanched. And then, with a deep sigh, he fell forward in a loose heap on the couch. I caught him in my arms. He was nerveless, powerless, speechless, paralyzed. The marvellous mechanism of the brain was stopped, and a travelling clot, entangled in the fine network of the veins, had been like a grain of dust entangled in the delicate works of a watch. The movement, not quite stopped, was rendered useless for work or indication. He was not dead; but he was not alive as he had been a minute ago; and once more matter asserted its supremacy, and arrested function forced the question: Where is now that independent entity you call the soul? where that thing you call the mind? Of this future leader of thought, this past culmination of intel-

lect, what was left?—an inert mass of flesh, speechless and reasonless—a clogged mechanism, with all its forces sterilized and obscured.

All that evening, and through the night, and for some twenty-four hours more, the boy lay in this terrible state—breathing, but not conscious; dead to himself and to the world, but still existing as an organism—a mere combination of physical forces working irregularly—a mere automatic machine, no more conscious than a pendulum, and with no more constructive intellect than an amœba.

Then he died—one scarcely knew when. The breathing grew gradually slower and fainter, the action of the heart feebler, till at last even the sharpest sense could discern nothing. It was like the fading away of the twilight after the sun has set. You could not say at what precise moment the twilight became darkness. Till the night was fully in the sky, you did not know that the day was done. So with the moment when Arthur

Ronalds passed wholly out of life; and the long lingering twilight, after the sharp sinking of the sun—that border-line where he had been neither alive nor dead—was unmistakably at an end.

Thus was quenched for ever one of the most glorious intellects which this generation would have had—thus was dissipated the force which, concentrated in that body and manifested through that brain, would have done so much for the world. It passed away into space before it had made the faintest mark on the sands of time. And what was left? A handful of milk-white ashes in a small alabaster urn—the incombustible residuum of that carbonized body, making a tangible memory to match the enduring thought; but of him, as he was—nothing!

I have stood by the graves of those I have loved most and honoured most; by the graves of my own people, whose lives seemed to be part of my own, so that when

they died it was as if some member of my body had been detached and buried out of sight; by the graves of great men whose work has changed the current of human thought, enlarged the boundaries of knowledge, and whose influence will live so long as the race endures: but I have never felt that I was standing by more than that which had been and now was not. Whether they had lived to the last of their powers, like Landor, or had done their life's work nobly, like Darwin — whether they had declined like Garibaldi, or had gone out in the morning of their promise like Clifford, like Balfour, like Buckle—or, still earlier, in their mere dawn, like Arthur—they had gone. Vixerunt:—they had lived. They had written their verses in the great poem of human history and had added their volute to the carved capitals of the temple; and then, the great ocean of night and the unknown had engulphed them; and we, standing on the shore—so soon to follow

them!—know no more of them than we know of the foam blown off from the crest of the wave by the wind.

Yet with this vague sense—mark! I do not say conviction, for I know nothing—this dumb dread of the absolute annihilation of the whole personality in one moment of time, one supreme throe of dissolution, I preserve my loyalty to the dear dead as part of my religion. They would not know if I were false to their love, treacherous to my trust. They are dead and done with. No sorrowful eyes would look at me through the darkness of the grave to reproach me with my falseness. The things of life and men are nought to them, and time and space are words which have no meaning for their closed ears. But, for the loyalty and love which do not die, I could as little forget or betray them, dead, as I could were they living to meet my inconstancy with scorn and my treachery with reproach.

Is this faithfulness of love the original,

whereof belief in immortality is the enlarged transcript ? For those nameless, unknown units, those Gurths and Wambas and undesignated Roman slaves and Spartan helots, we do not formulate an individual immortality. But for the child, the father, the husband, the lover—for the mother who was our visible angel—for the woman we loved, who died before satiety had slain that love—for these, and for our friends, we create our place of departed souls, and house them there, still living though unseen —loving and beloved as when we last pressed their hands in ours, and last saw ourselves reflected in their eyes.

Oh for one to rise indeed from the dead, and tell us the Great Secret which ends all life ! Oh ! to be told the TRUTH, and to know if love be final here and hope a mere phantasy of love—no more solid than the Spectre of the Brocken—or if the instinct of that love has been truer than knowledge, and has revealed what science cannot touch!

The ghostly shapes of sorrow and despair crowd round us thick as summer corn. Were we veritably assured that this life is indeed only the time of trial and probation—transitory, preparatory, as they say—to how small a volume even its greatest miseries would shrink! But deeper and lower than all creed, all faith, lies the consciousness of loss, the sentiment of death; and the mother who does not think twice of her darling out of sight among the flowers in the garden, weeps night and day for the death which yet she believes has carried her up to God and His heaven, and landed her in the world of endless delight.

Would that we could know! For if following after a phantom be a delusion—and delusion is only madness; not seeing the light is blindness—and blindness is mutilation. Between dread of believing a sham, and turning into the darkness of the night when the day shines bright behind those closed shutters which we could open, if we

would, the mind gets racked and riven. And the outside absolute to determine which is true, is yet to find—though we all so painfully seek, and some of us so firmly believe that we have taken secure and enduring hold!

CHAPTER IX.

TOO much pain had been crowded of late years into my life for even my robust physique to bear. My strength had been over-strained, and the penalty had to be paid sooner or later. After the death of this dearest child of my hope and love I fell dangerously ill; the cause being a chill; and Mrs. Barry came daily to look after me, as an uncertificated Sister of Mercy. My wife was away on a lecturing tour in the North; and as we did not correspond when she was absent, she did not know of my illness until it was over, else I am sure that she would have done her duty to me as

faithfully as to any other. Thus it was that my dear dead boy's second mother came about me as my caretaker; and it was then that I got to know her as she was.

I scarcely know how to describe Felicia Barry. She was one of those women who, close on fifty as they are, all men wish were under thirty and most forget that they are not. She had never been supremely handsome, but must have always been beautiful; and she was beautiful even now. She had retained the luxuriance of her glossy brown hair, the brightness of her dark grey eyes, the graceful outlines of her tall and generous figure, the delicacy of her well-shaped hands and the sensitiveness of her skin. She blushed as easily as if she had been sixteen; and she was one of those rare Englishwomen whose faces smile from lip to brow, and whose eyes laugh with their mouth. She had the charm of two ages and seemed to be of neither. With the fresh enthusiasm of a girl she

united the patience and knowledge, the tender sympathies and generous maternity, of a woman. Men loved her with passion, and little children went willingly into her arms, as if she had been a new mother, recognised before known. Young men and women made her their confidant and trusted to her sympathy, not in vain. Even when they had confided to her what was weak, or what was wrong, she helped them with her strength, her pity, her purity, her resolve. Tender and beneficent as the gentle rain which falls alike on the just and on the unjust, she knew no shrinking, no repulsion from those who failed the higher law—save for the two crimes of treachery and cruelty. With these she held no terms. For all the rest her pity overlapped repugnance.

Wherever she went she gave sympathy and garnered love — kinswoman of the whole human race as she was. Of all women ever known to me, she was the

most many-sided and with the largest amount of emotional vitality. She always reminded me of the Venus of Milo; and her character harmonized with her form.

Her life had been sorrowful enough in its acted history; but her philosophy admitted of no closed tombs by the roadside where Love crouches in eternal mourning; of no slow marchings to the sound of a funeral hymn up the endless pathway of despair. While she lived, she used to say with me, she must conquer her sorrow or it would conquer her. She could not exist in that dull Nifleheim of melancholy where so many torpid souls find a weary kind of stagnant home; she must be out in the full sunshine, blessing others, and in thus blessing, blessed. She must love, if not in one form then in another—as wife or as mother, as sister or as friend, as equal or as protectress; and sometimes—but very rarely—as a willing and voluntary subordinate. Her life had been too inde-

pendent, her character was too strongly individual, her affections were too opulent and her activities were too highly energized for this last phase to be either frequent or possible with her. Even where she loved, she held her own; and, should her views chance to be at cross-corners with those of the man for whom, however, she would have died if need be, she kept true both to her principles and her love, and did not suffer the one to eat into nor undermine the other. Where she gave with most lavish prodigality, she always kept in reserve that inner citadel of conscience which no one can yield up without the loss of honour.

This is a doctrine unacceptable to men in general; for almost all believe, if even they do not openly maintain, that a woman's love rightfully includes her mental subjection; and that 'she to God through him' is in very truth the norm of wholesome human life.

When I first knew Mrs. Barry, she was free, for the first time since she had been eighteen. She had been married at that age to a strange, unreal kind of man, who must have been more like a learned gnome than an average human being. He was an algebraic equation, not a man; a vitalized theorem, not a laughing, weeping, living creature, with passions, pleasures, weaknesses and virtues like the rest. He was not even personable, being tall, lean, dried up, even when he was young; and his temper was as perverse as his person was unlovely. But he was phenomenally learned; and his masterly intelligence won the girl's imagination.

Full of intellectual ardour and living in a home curiously arid and unsympathetic, she believed that in Josiah Barry she had found one who would be more than her guide, greater than her master—one who would be like some archangel carrying her through the upper air into the highest and

purest regions possible to human thought. For she was inexperienced enough to imagine that the moral nature keeps even step with intellectual perception, and that the man who most clearly discerns an ethical law is sure to most faithfully translate it into daily action. She loved the ideal man projected on the screen of her fancy—she fashioned the crystal out of the earth; and she married Mr. Barry, believing that she was marrying the moral best of which humanity is capable. She found instead that she had married a magnificent intellectual synthesis; but something out of which all that is most lovable, most valuable in living human nature has been taken.

He married her for the strange pride which some have to be the public possessor of a beautiful woman. He did not love her; and he did not give himself the trouble of feigning what he did not feel. After he had married her, he did not care to con-

tinue to instruct her, as he had done in the beginning of things—by which indeed the whole affair had come about. He neither associated her with his studies nor directed her own; and the interest which he had taken in the girl's improvement fell off into worse than indifference for the wife's. It descended to contempt, set round with brutality. When she asked his opinion on any purely literary matter, his better judgment on a point of history say, or his help in a stiff bit of translation—he would tell her to play with her doll, if he were simply contemptuous, or to leave him alone and not talk of things she had not wit to understand, if he were more savage and discourteous than usual. At no time did he care to please nor to gratify her. And only when they were together in public did he treat her with courtesy or show her such attentions as western civilization has accustomed women to expect from the men with whom they are connected. And

then his courtesy was so excessive, his attentions were so exaggerated, that all the natural truth and sincerity of the woman rebelled against the falsehood.

Thus she put herself in the wrong with others by her want of response to that which they looked on as the expression of faithful love, and which she felt to be an insult as well as a pretence.

They lived together for about six years; after which, by mutual consent, they separated—he living in London, she at Richmond. She had a small income of her own, just enough to keep her above actual want. What more she needed she worked for; and her work was of such quality as soon gave her more than mere comfort. When her father died she came in for her share of a fine property, by which her comfort was lifted into affluence. And just before I knew her, her husband had left the world he neither helped forward nor adorned, and the woman

whom the law had made his prisoner on parole was free, when it was too late to make use of her liberty.

Mrs. Barry was to me the type of the Ideal Woman. She knew all the harmonies and all the discords of human life, and in her own person she had touched many of its deepest chords. She had suffered much, as must needs have been, but she had enjoyed more; and she remembered her pleasures while she let her sorrows fade away like ghosts in the dawn. Married as she had been at eighteen, and married to a phantasm, not a reality—at twenty-four thrown on herself for guidance, protection and support—young, beautiful, and what Americans would call alive and magnetic—greatly loved and greatly censured—in her own nature one to whom love was life and life was love—it can easily be imagined what she had suffered, what she had been made to endure and forced to renounce. But she was 'semper

virent,' because she was strong, hopeful and unselfish. More than once she had lost the central treasure which had made her life desirable, but she had never owned herself defeated. Again and again beaten down like an Amazon to her knee, again and again she had risen up unconquered, to renew the fight with sorrow and disappointment—with personal pain and social peril.

Through all her hard and heavy trials she had kept her power of loving, of trusting, of sympathizing, of self-giving; and her great rich heart had never been drained. Like Hera, who renewed her youth when she bathed in the fountain of Canathus, Mrs. Barry renewed the spring-time of her mind and heart when she bathed in the fountain of a new emotion—an unexhausted duty—a fresh study. She lived only for knowledge and humanity—to learn, to do good, to give happiness. While there was one unhappy person in the world to bring back

to peace—one child to educate into a noble man or worthy woman—one sorrow to soothe—one desolate heart to cheer—she used often to say life would not have lost its charm for her. When she could no longer do good, then let her die, but not till then. And if ever that day should come, then she would indeed die, for then her work would be done. But she was far from that time yet—rich, unexhausted as she was.

It is impossible for me to say how much I admired this woman — this modern Demeter—this great Mother of Sorrows and Harvester of Love. If she renewed her own youth by loving, she renewed that of others by causing them to love. And especially did she renew mine. She seemed to knit up in herself all the poetry and vitality of my past life—to be a kind of microcosm, containing in her own person the qualities which had been divided among others, and repeating the experiences

which had been scattered among those others. My physical sense could not refuse to see that, marvellously conserved as she was—beautiful as she still was—she yet was no longer absolutely young. Fifty, however good, is always fifty. But to my mind, to my heart, she was old no more than nature is old, than the sun is old to the fire-worshipper, than Ceres was old to the Roman who laid corn before her altar as his father and grandfather had done before him. What Ninon de l'Enclos was in a baser, Felicia Barry was in a nobler sense; and the lines of their experience ran parallel—on different planes.

As my regret with Arthur was that he had not been my son, so my sorrow with Mrs. Barry was that she had not been my sister, seeing that she could never have been my wife. To have lived with her would have been to have lived in such intellectual and emotional opulence as would have compensated me for all I had lost. To have con-

tributed to her happiness would have been the culmination of my own.

Her own history might be told in a phrase. 'He was impatient, and he would not wait.' Had he had self-control, it would certainly have been waiting for a whole life-time—but the reward at the end? Would not that have repaid him? He thought so now, when he sat by the hearth which gave him only the tie of a home with none of its deeper harmonies nor sweeter sentiments. Loving Felicia, but irritated and indignant at the obstacles between them, he suddenly flung off his wiser love, his better constancy, and married a woman who had nothing but her prettiness to recommend her. And marriage needs more than a pretty face to keep it fresh and wholesome! Besides, his past career had not been one to fit him for domestic life, save under exceptional conditions.

Handsome, clever, reckless and restless,

he had lived a stormy life, and had plunged up to the hilt in personal adventures and passionate emotions. He had been a great traveller and a famous sportsman; and, what with shipwrecks, savages, lion hunts and rogue elephants, dusky loves and crowned caprices, the note-book of his memory was pretty well filled, and not much was left for him to learn. But his charm for women was the wonderful strain of chivalrous tenderness and knightly loyalty which ran through a character where strength bordered on brutality, and where the violence of the darker passions made that gentler strain so much the more remarkable. He loved animals and children, was a good comrade with men and a devoted admirer of women. He never betrayed those who trusted him; and he had been trusted by more than the world either knew or suspected.

He had also had heavy losses and misfortunes; and this gave him the key to

woman's love by the way of her sympathy. Perhaps this had been the strongest link of all those which had bound him to Mrs. Barry. Be that as it may, she had loved him, and he her; but the patience which would have carried her triumphantly through a life-long trial failed him, and he threw away the chance of that which would have been his recompense for all time, had he had but enough courage and constancy of hope to have held on.

I knew what she suffered now, when the final snapping of the shadowy link between her and her husband gave her useless freedom. My own experience was the key which unlocked all problems of love and pain. If only he had waited! Fretting under his self-imposed yoke; unable to respect, but having no cause to repudiate, the light-minded little feather-head, who kept substantially straight because she had not intensity enough to go wrong; offended in his pride and dignity by the appearance

of things, his wife seeming to be ever on the verge of toppling over into the abyss on the dangerous edge of which she danced; knowing what he had lost; loving Mrs. Barry now as much as he had loved her in the beginning—he too was to be pitied; though naturally I had not so much sympathy for him as for her, arbiter of his own destiny as he had been—'the careful pilot of his proper woe.' But she knew how to bear with the dignity of self-control the sorrow which no effort of the will, no energy of action, could change into joy. Strong as she was to love, and sensitive to suffering, she was yet stronger to resist the demoralization of despair. And that light-minded, feeble-willed Helen has no better friend than the woman whom her husband loves in sorrow and who loves him in silence—keeping her faith to him deep in that centre of the heart which no time nor outward circumstance touches, even with the lightest hand.

To me too she is a friend. And with this I am bound to be content. But sometimes, when I think of what might have been, I feel that smarting of the eyes which follows on the aching of the heart; and then I have to bestir myself and press back into the depths thoughts which only weaken and unman myself and do no good to anyone. Patience, hope, courage and the resolve never to be beaten and always to press forward—these are better than regrets. If we cannot have the noonday sun, is it wise to disdain the moonlight? Direct splendour the one, reflected glory the other; but is not that reflection better than the dead darkness of the sky where hang only clouds that drop down rain? For the noontide sun of love I am given only the pale beauty of the moon. So let it be. To my litany of thanksgiving I can add also this clause—gratitude for the simple friendship of the woman whose love would have given me new life.

CHAPTER X.

DOES the character make or attract the dominant circumstances of life? This is one of the problems I have never been able to answer. Yet it is specially interesting to myself, seeing that I have been in the wash of certain results, into which I was not conscious of plunging so much as of being overtaken by; as Orestes did not go to meet the Furies—they followed after him.

I have made, or attracted to myself, as the dominant circumstances of my life—Loneliness and Loss. Most of my moral investments have failed, and I have heaped up more fairy gold than substantial treasure.

This experience, so uniform in its working—must surely be due to some mental quality, as a man who takes all the epidemics afloat takes them because of some physical condition. Does constancy of circumstance spring from some personal fault, or is it the result of some uncatalogued law of attraction, which is to the moral life what facility for taking disease is to the physical? Is the silver spoon an airy fact, and luck more than the gambler's superstition? Yet how can one act differently from the law laid down by our moral condition? Let me go over those cross-lines which deface the smooth surface of a picture—give a list of various unfortunate investments whereby a man stands to lose all round.

With independence of judgment and inability to follow any leader, sheep-like, a man loses the support of every party, and may be attacked with most virulence by the very journals for which he himself has worked.

With a passionate temperament, yet by principle striving after the moralities of patience and forbearance, he suffers wrong up to a certain point, and suffers so quietly that he gets to be looked on as uninflammable as a block of ice and with no more resisting power than a flock of wool. When suddenly the whole thing blazes and breaks asunder, and long-suffering and patience go by the board, like hen-coops in a storm. In which case his reprisals are resented as aggressions.

In politics a democrat, by birth a Brahmin of the Brahmins, he suffers real pain when brought into contact with the jagged edges of his rough diamonds. Yet, being loyal, he sticks by his chosen friends of the third region ; and those of his inheritance despise him for his taste.

If a freethinker, all of whose early associations are in the camp of the orthodox, he has to submit to the condemnation of those he loves best—they believing that

faith is a matter of the will, and that unbelief is as much a voluntary crime as murder or burglary.

Loving peace in private life, but a hard hitter for conscience' sake, he offends those whom personally he loves and privately respects, because called on to denounce their public work.

If largely vitalized, his moral atmosphere has a certain quality of exaggeration which makes that people read into him and his words meanings other than his own, and give his grip a power he neither intended nor put out when he laid hold.

Having the courage of his convictions, and ready if need be to stand in the pillory for his flag, but as sensitive as a girl underneath his controversial armour, he suffers acutely when the lash falls; and though he makes no cry is tortured as severely as his worst enemies would desire.

Cultivating trust in goodness as a counterpoise to that arid suspiciousness which

springs from knowledge of the world, he is for ever falling among thieves; and as he would rather suffer loss than protect himself by sharp practice, he has the satisfaction of keeping his integrity at the expense of his worldly substance.

By nature constant, by the circumstances of his life unanchored, and by temperament unable to live on memories and dreams, he is always hoping afresh, to be disappointed anew; and true love of a vital kind is the mirage ever before him and never attained.

Such a man is on all sides a kind of Mohammed's coffin, firmly attached to nothing.

And I ask again the question I have never been able to answer: Does character make or attract the dominant circumstances of the life? Is conduct indeed fate, in any other sense than that in which the form of a crystal is determined by its own law?

My own law of life has been, as I have said, that of loneliness and loss. This last is especially true of my deepest hopes and strongest affections. My friendships, on the other hand—friendships pure and simple—flourish when those others have withered and faded into nothingness. Without those friendships, I should be wrecked without redemption. With them, I can bear the intrinsic isolation of my life with the same feeling as I have when I warm my hands by another's fire. But friendship is not love; and another's fire is not my own.

For all that, I have still a life to lead, and ulterior possibilities to attain.

Old, grey-headed, alone—my passions tamed, my energy subdued, my hope dead, my love futile—I sit in the darkening twilight and think over the problem of existence and what it has taught me. So far, all my sorrows and disappointments have been of this good to me: They have broken

down the masterful passion of my temperament and crushed out of me the egotistical desire of personal happiness with which I began my career. Life has shown me that this personal happiness comes to us in fullest quantity when we give most and ask least; and that in the pain of renunciation itself is the consolation which is born of strength. It is only the weak who demand; the strong give—and in that giving shape for themselves the diadem which others ask from a beneficent fate and a generous fortune.

No age is too old for this outflowing of love. When the day is spent and the sun has gone down, the lustreless earth radiates its stored energy of heat into the night. And the old, who need care, can return gratitude, and while they accept consideration can bestow sympathy. I, who say this, say it with full knowledge of all that my words imply. I, who advocate the generous gift of love and the patient ten-

derness of altruism, speak from the door of no full storehouse, but rather from among the ruins of an empty and dismantled home. I do not, like some wealthy man married to the woman he loves and the father of children he adores, preach content with poverty and ascetic self-suppression to the poor wretch shivering and starving in the streets—to the heart-broken lover burning in the fever of despair on the other side of that impassable gulf. The catalogue of my possessions holds very little from which to gather joy or on which to found content. And yet I have both.

I stand absolutely alone, both spiritually and personally; with only my belief in the better future of humanity as a fixed point of faith, and only my desire to help on that better future as a stimulus to endeavour. I have no fulfilled hope; no realized ambition; no steadfast love to make life glad and the grey days golden; and death brings with it no certainty of amends, but only the vague

possibilities of the great Perhaps. Those whom I have most loved have most sorrowed me; what sacrifices I have made for the good of others have been rendered barren and abortive; my faith given to man has been again and again betrayed. The humanity, in the love of which I live, neither recognises my devotion nor knows of me as I am; and my hold on the present is as unsubstantial as was my hope in the past. I have no resting-place on earth and no surety of a home in heaven; and belief in the Divine Providence of God, which makes others resigned to their fate, has fallen from me, like the glorious dreams of my youth.

Nevertheless, I am neither broken nor unhappy. While there is a sunset to look at or a sunrise to watch for; human sorrow to be soothed and human virtue to be loved; knowledge to be gained; a new fact in science to be learned; a noble picture to see; stately music to hear—while the great work

of man's moral progress has to be continued and nature has still her secrets to be won —enough is left to make life worth living and energy worth preserving.

I repeat the words I have used once before, because the feeling repeats itself through the circumstance: Of what moment is individual happiness or misery, compared with the sum of the general content or loss? The individual is nothing; the Great Man is all. The present is the smallest of our possessions; in the future lie the unmeasured potentialities. And I find in this altruistic philosophy, as well as in the confession of an absolute, immovable, and impersonal Law, as much help as the pious find in resignation to the Will of God. In each it is the annihilation of self. Thus, though the day is almost over for myself, and all personal fruitfulness of aspiration has become an impossibility—though my past has been a failure, my love a regret, my hope an illusion—I am young, because I live in the

race which renews its youth with every day that dawns; and I am not disillusioned, because I love the virtues which never fail in the mass.

As I draw nearer and ever nearer to the moment when I shall be resolved into the Great Whole, and passion, which gives to youth its sense of reality, loosens its grip as vitality wanes in volume, I recognise ever more clearly the shifting, phantasmagoric and subjective character of life—and how that nothing is intrinsic nor essential, but all is conditional and accidental. Yet lying at the solid core within this changing world of phantasms is one truth as strong as a triple wall of brass—the great truth of moral evolution whence springs the doctrine of Duty.

Had I to write an ethical testament, it would be to lay on the heirs of my thought repudiation of the indolence of pessimism, of the sterility of egotism, of the fossilization of theology 'that bastard

daughter of science and religion.' I would urge them to measure the distance already traversed between the highest thinker and the lowest savage, and I would ask them: Where, with that long stride from the past, are the limits of the future to be set? I would substitute the good of others for endeavours after individual salvation; and for belief in a special Providence, guarding some and abandoning the rest, the impartiality of Law, which knows nothing beyond itself. For the concentration of thought and energy on the elucidation of unprovable dogmas, I would urge the active amelioration of physical evils; for theological finality, that vitalizing faith in indefinite expansion which makes all things possible. For human insulation I would show the homogeneity of all nature, where man is the brain, truly, of the world, but not outside the ring-fence, nor differing, save in degree and orderly development, from the rest. For the confession of abject sinful-